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Welcome to the 2008 Interim Review of Halton’s second Local Transport Plan (LTP2). LTP2 covers the period 2006/07 to 2010/11 and this report focuses on how we have delivered the first two years of LTP2 (April 2006 to March 2008). It highlights key achievements made during this time and sets out the perceived risks for the remaining years.

The Local Transport Plan (LTP) is a statutory document containing Halton Borough Council’s objectives, strategies and policies for transport. It details the schemes and initiatives that will be delivered along with projected expenditure, and performance indicators & targets to monitor our progress. Halton’s second LTP was structured around the four shared priorities agreed between Local Authorities and the Government:

- Tackling Congestion
- Delivering Accessibility
- Safer Roads, and
- Better Air Quality

The shared priorities were underpinned by a ‘Toolbox’ of Primary Transport Strategies that targeted specific transport areas, presented as an Appendix supporting the LTP. The draft ‘Provisional’ LTP went through an extensive process of development and consultation before being published as a ‘Final’ version in 2006.

During LTP1 (2001/02- 2005/06), Halton Borough Council (HBC) was required to produce Annual Progress Reports (APRs). These reports were submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) and the performance of the authority was scored on the basis of evidence presented in the report, with funding for future years being adjusted accordingly. Under LTP2, a different reporting and funding regime has been applied. At the start of LTP2, capital funding for a large portion of the LTP (‘Integrated Transport Block’) was allocated for the whole five-year period. As a result APRs are no longer required and instead authorities submit simple annual returns with a more detailed review of progress required both midway through LTP2 in 2008, and again at the end of the LTP2 period. The review process is based around a series of constructive and open discussions with the Government Office North West (GONW) and this report is the end product of that process.

Guidance produced by the DfT has indicated that the Interim Review Reports will not be formally classified or scored.

The Interim Review shows that the LTP funding allotted to Halton for the two years, totalling £8½ million, was spent effectively and that over 70% of annual LTP targets were met by the end of the period. Key highlights from the period include:

- Continued progress on the Mersey Gateway crossing including development of a Sustainable Transport Strategy.
- Development of a new scheme to feedback journey time information to drivers for the strategic route across the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB).
- Commissioning of research into critical wind speeds on the SJB.
- Introduction of a ‘Links2Work’ service to help people accessing employment in industrial areas.
- Independent Travel Training to support people who need extra help in gaining the essential skills to access public transport.
- Introduction of a ‘Halton Hopper’ weekly multi-operator ticket and subsequent development of a student hopper ticket and a ‘Young Person’s Hopper’.
- Continued development of the Greenway network for walking and cycling.
- Implementation of a sustainable travel project for the Widnes Waterfront EDZ development.
- Development of a new ‘Door2Door’ service integrating accessible services offered by Halton Community Transport (HCT) with NBC’s fleet transport, accompanied by investment in new vehicles and vehicle scheduling/booking software.

- Increased emphasis on the role of Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity (RSET&P) with initiatives such as ‘Crucial Crew’, ‘Megadrive’, ‘Fit Bar’, ‘Pass-Plus’ and ‘Powerbikes’.

- Introduction of the first ‘Red Routes’ in the Borough, targeting drivers on routes that have been identified as having severe collisions.

- Enhanced air quality monitoring in key areas of the Borough.

An important part of the Interim Review is the assessment of opportunities and risks facing delivery over the remaining years of LTP2. A ‘traffic light’ system (Green = low risk, Amber = medium risk, and Red = high risk) has been used to broadly categorise the overall level of risk for each of the four Shared Priorities; congestion & network management, accessibility, safer roads and air quality, (ii) asset management, (iii) use of resources and (iv) local priorities/wider objectives. The assessment shows that five out of the seven headings can be graded as ‘Green’ and the remaining two as ‘Amber’, and overall Halton Borough Council remains confident that it can successfully deliver LTP2.

Increasingly, transport is recognised as playing a crucial role in meeting the needs of local communities and supporting the local economy. The Local Government White Paper (2006) has started the process of drawing local transport more into the remit of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). Halton has been proactive in this process, establishing a Transport Board under the Halton Strategic Partnership to support the LSP. The Transport Board has been involved in the LTP Interim Review and has assisted with the development of this report. Throughout this document we have highlighted the links between transport outcomes and the objectives of Halton’s Community Strategy developed by the LSP.
Looking to the future, further changes are likely with the establishment of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) and the introduction in 2009/10 of a Multiple Area Agreement (MAA) that includes transport. Powers proposed under the Local Transport Bill may also result in changes in the way responsibilities for highways, traffic and transport are fulfilled with a new Integrated Transport Authority being established for the City Region.

This report gives a clear summary of the progress that has been made during LTP2 and a flavour of some of the successful schemes Halton has introduced.
1.1. Setting the Scene: Halton's Story of Place

Originally formed in 1974, Halton is largely an urban borough with a current population of around 118,900. In 1998, Halton Borough Council (HBC) became a Unitary Authority and took on responsibility for all local services including highways, traffic and transport.

Halton’s two main settlements, Runcorn and Widnes face each other across the River Mersey just 10 miles upstream from Liverpool. In terms of transport, the position of the towns has strongly influenced the way they developed. The connections and resources provided by the River Mersey and the later development of canals, railways and roads helped to drive industrialisation of the towns. Halton has a strong industrial legacy, particularly from the chemicals industries and as a result, has inherited a number of physical, environmental and social problems. The eventual decline of the manufacturing industry badly affected the towns and economic regeneration is one of the key priorities for the Borough. Today, Halton shares many of the social and economic problems more usually associated with its urban neighbours on Merseyside and the latest Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD, 2007) shows that Halton ranks nationally 30th out of 354 authorities for deprivation and ranks 3rd highest on Merseyside.

Whilst the position of the two towns on the Mersey created opportunities, it also acted as a barrier to movements both between the towns and between Merseyside and the wider region. The demand for cross-river movements was first met by ferry and later by rail/foot traffic with construction of a rail bridge and walkway in 1864. In 1905, motor vehicles were able to cross for the first time using a newly constructed Transporter Bridge but it wasn’t until 1961 that a fixed road link between the towns was provided with the opening of the Runcorn Widnes Bridge, which was later renamed the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB). Today, the SJB provides a key crossing for the region, carrying high levels of through-traffic and traffic flows 1½ times greater than the flows it was designed to carry. The Bridge and its approaches suffer badly from traffic congestion; offer only limited facilities for public transport, walking and cycling; and require considerable investment in maintenance. To tackle these problems, Halton Borough Council is developing the Mersey Gateway, a new tolled crossing to the east of the SJB, together with schemes to address maintenance of the SJB and provide facilities for sustainable transport.

In 1964, Runcorn was designated a 'New Town' and work began on new transport systems to accompany the development. An ‘Expressway’ road network was created, serving the new town, connecting with other strategic routes and linking with Widnes via the SJB. Within the new town, a segregated road for buses or ‘Busway’ was constructed enabling direct access to key areas of the new town and providing bus stops within 10 minutes walk of the new housing. Although ‘visionary’ in providing dedicated space for bus rapid transit, the Busway is now battling with ageing infrastructure, isolation and anti-social behaviour. HBC believes that the Busway remains a valuable transport asset for the Borough and is exploring ways to improve the Busway and bring facilities up-to-date.

Halton’s position on the Mersey continues to shape the development of settlements and transport networks in the Borough. In terms of road transport, the expressway network and the SJB link with the national motorway network and provide a gateway to Liverpool John Lennon Airport, Merseyside and the North West. This generates opportunities for residents and businesses but brings with it the associated problems of high traffic levels, congestion and pollution. Opportunities for rail travel are provided by four stations in the Borough; Runcorn (Liverpool-London-Birmingham), Runcorn East (North Wales-Chester-Manchester) and Hough Green & Widnes (Liverpool-Manchester-East England). This demonstrates again Halton’s importance as a transport ‘hub’ for east-west and north-south movements but considerable work is still required to make connections between movements; the joint Halton/Merseyside project to re-open the Halton Curve is part of this work.

Transport links also play an important role in regeneration as demonstrated by the 3MG Mersey Multi-Modal Gateway (a major new rail/road freight handling and logistics park at Ditton) and the regeneration of Weston Docks to create an intermodal transport facility with improved road, rail, inland-waterway and deep-sea freight logistics. One of the key challenges facing the Borough over the coming years will be to promote economic growth whilst ensuring at the same time that the associated demand for travel can be met in a sustainable and affordable way.

1.2. The Second Local Transport Plan (LTP2), 2006/07-2010/11

The Local Transport Plan (LTP) is a statutory document that sets out Halton Borough Council’s objectives, strategies and policies for transport. Halton’s second Local Transport Plan (LTP2) covers the period 2006/07 to 2010/11 and includes details of schemes and initiatives that will be delivered together with indicators and targets against which progress can be measured. It is the main mechanism through which the Local Authority secures capital funding from Central Government for highway maintenance, bridge maintenance and for local transport initiatives (known as the ‘Integrated Transport Block’).

LTP2 continues the work achieved under LTP1 (2001/02 to 2005/06) for which Halton was awarded ‘Excellent’
by the Department for Transport (DfT). The same grade of 'Excellent' was awarded for the initial assessment of LTP2. This double award led to Halton being allocated additional "Integrated Transport Block" funding on top of what was originally indicated by the DfT. The Integrated Transport Block allocated to Halton for the 5 years covered by LTP2 therefore totalled £9,891,000 which equates to an increase of 25% for the last 4 years’ indicative allocation.

The full LTP document can be viewed on the Council website www.halton.gov.uk under 'Transport and Streets'. Alternatively, copies of the document can be obtained from the Council by contacting the address shown on the back page of this report.

1.3. THE OBJECTIVE OF LTP2

The philosophy underlying LTP2 is that 'Transport is not an end in itself but is a means to an end' and the role of transport is to provide access to the facilities and services that are required to make a society function. The overarching objective agreed for LTP2 is:

'The delivery of a smart, sustainable, inclusive and accessible transport system and infrastructure that seeks to improve the quality of life for people living in Halton by encouraging economic growth and regeneration, and the protection and enhancement of the historic, natural and human environment' (LTP2, p3).

This objective is underpinned by the four Shared Transport Priorities agreed between central Government and local authorities: 'Tackling Congestion', 'Delivering Accessibility', 'Safer Roads', and 'Better Air Quality'. This Interim Review Report is structured around the four Shared Transport Priorities.

1.4. HALTON’S COMMUNITY STRATEGY

Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) are required to produce a Community Strategy for their area. The Community Strategy seeks to enhance the quality of life for local communities and set out priorities and the vision, objectives and action plan for the area. It provides an overarching framework through which the corporate, strategic and operational plans of all LSP partners can contribute; these plans include Halton Borough Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP). Throughout this document you will find references to Halton's second Community Strategy ('A Community Strategy for a Sustainable Halton 2006-2011'). More information about the Community Strategy can be found on the Halton LSP website: www.haltonpartnership.net. Halton's five key priorities from the Community Strategy focus on Urban Renewal; Health; Employment and Skills; Children and Young People; and Safety.

1.5. LTP2 INTERIM REVIEW

During LTP1, Halton Borough Council (HBC) was required to produce Annual Progress Reports (APRs) on the Local Transport Plan. These reports were submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) and the performance of the authority was scored on the basis of evidence presented in the report and funding for future years adjusted accordingly.

Under LTP2, a different reporting and funding regime has been established. At the start of LTP2, capital funding for the 'Integrated Transport Block' was allocated to each authority for the whole 5-year LTP period. This provided a stable platform for authorities to focus their efforts on delivering LTP priorities and gave certainty about funding for future years. Detailed annual progress reports are no longer required and instead local authorities provide annual information on simple reporting forms. Approximately mid-way through the LTP period, local authorities are required to produce a more detailed 'Interim Review' and a further review is likely to be due towards the end of LTP2. This report is the end product of the LTP2 2008 Interim Review.

Guidance produced by the DfT stresses that the Review reports will not be formally classified or scored but instead are part of a constructive and open relationship between the authority and the Government Regional Office. Throughout the Interim Review, Halton Borough Council has been meeting regularly with representatives from Government Office North West (GONW) to discuss progress. Key stakeholders, including representatives from LSP partners have also been involved in the review. Draft versions of the Interim Review Report have been presented to both GONW and the Halton Strategic Partnership Transport Board at all main stages in the review process.

In line with the DfT guidance, we have tried to keep this report concise whilst at the same time, presenting all the information required. Figure 1.1 shows the structure of the Interim Review Report in diagram form.

Section 1 of the Interim Review report provides a brief introduction. Sections 2 to 5 discuss each of the Shared Transport Priorities in turn, setting the local context before moving on to highlight case studies of action taken. An assessment of the impact as measured by LTP indicators is presented for each priority in the form of a bar chart plotting 'targets met', 'targets on-track' and 'targets not met' for each year. Following the charts, future monitoring proposals for each priority are discussed. Capital spend contributing to the priority through (i) direct measures and (ii) indirectly through modal shift is presented for each priority in chart form for the 2-year period (2006/07 & 2007/08) together with a similar chart giving details of revenue spend. Spending on some measures appears under more than one of the Shared Priorities; for example Quality Corridors appears under 'Tackling Congestion', 'Delivering Accessibility', 'Safer Roads' and 'Better Air Quality'. Rather than an attempt to artificially divide spending on Quality Corridors between the priorities, the full amount is repeated each time. This demonstrates how measures and spending can be "cross-cutting". Each section on the Shared Priorities concludes with a risk assessment, setting out opportunities, threats, barriers and obstacles in delivery for the remaining years of LTP2.

In the remainder of the report, Section 6 discusses briefly progress on Asset Management whilst Section 7 provides an overview of the wider contribution of transport to local priorities. Section 8 gives an overview of progress as shown by the LTP indicators and Section 9 gives a summary of the use of resources (capital and revenue). The report concludes with an assessment of the overall risk to delivery faced in the remainder of LTP2 (Section 10).

Appendix A of the report provides target and actual figures for LTP indicators in the form of two tables: one for mandatory indicators and one for local indicators. The figures for the targets shown in Appendix A for years up to and including 2007/08 are those that were originally set out in LTP2. Targets for 2008/09 onwards reflect any changes proposed as a result of the Interim Review. A summary of proposed changes to indicators and new targets is shown in Appendix B. Appendix C provides a summary of progress against each of the key actions listed in LTP2 and highlights where they link to the four Shared Priorities and the key objectives of Halton's Community Strategy. Appendix D provides a list of the key objectives under each priority heading in Halton's Community Strategy and a diagram showing the structure of Halton Strategic Partnership.
Figure 1.1: Structure of the Interim Review Report

1.0 - Introduction

2.0 - Tackling Congestion & Network Management Duties
- Introduction & context
- Actions taken, case studies & partnership working
- Impact / LTP2 indicators
- Future monitoring
- Use of LTP2 resources
- Risk assessment

3.0 - Delivering Accessibility including PRoW
- Introduction & context
- Actions taken, case studies & partnership working
- Impact / LTP2 indicators
- Future monitoring
- Use of LTP2 resources
- Risk assessment

4.0 - Safer Roads
- Introduction & context
- Actions taken, case studies & partnership working
- Impact / LTP2 indicators
- Future monitoring
- Use of LTP2 resources
- Risk assessment

5.0 - Better Air Quality
- Introduction & context
- Actions taken, case studies & partnership working
- Impact / LTP2 indicators
- Future monitoring
- Use of LTP2 resources
- Risk assessment

6.0 - Asset Management

7.0 - Local Priorities / Wider Contribution

8.0 - Programme Overview: Progress

9.0 - Programme Overview: Use of Resources

10.0 – Programme Overview: Risk

Appendix A - Summary of progress: LTP2 Indicators

Appendix B - Summary of proposals for future monitoring

Appendix C - Progress on LTP2 Key Actions

Appendix D - Key Objectives for Halton’s Community Strategy and Halton Strategic Partnership: Structure

Inside back cover – Map showing LTP2 scheme locations
2.0 TACKLING CONGESTION AND NETWORK MANAGEMENT DUTIES

2.1. INTRODUCTION

“A good transport network is important in sustaining economic success in modern economies: the transport system links people to jobs; delivers products to markets; underpins supply chains and logistics networks; and is the lifeblood of domestic and international trade”


Traffic congestion impacts on businesses and the local economy and the Eddington study estimated that eliminating existing congestion on the road network nationally would be worth £7-8 billion per annum. Tackling congestion supports several of the aims and objectives of Halton’s Community Strategy and specifically:

- Create ‘an economically prosperous borough that encourages investment, entrepreneurship, enterprise and business growth’ (Employment, Learning & Skills)
- Transforming ‘the urban fabric and infrastructure to create a vibrant and accessible borough’ (Halton’s Urban Renewal).
- ‘Ensure Halton designs in and maintains high levels of accessibility to places and spaces so that opportunity and needs are matched, and provides excellent connectivity to the wider world through transport and ICT links’ (Halton’s Urban Renewal).

The two towns in the Borough, Runcorn and Widnes, face each other across the River Mersey and the only direct road link between them is via the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB). The demand to travel across the SJB is high and traffic flows can exceed 90,000 vehicles per day. At this level of flow, the SJB is forced to carry 1½ times more traffic than the theoretical highway capacity of the bridge, causing ‘stop-start’ conditions. Congestion on the SJB and its approaches is experienced on a daily basis and together these constitute the major congestion issue for Halton. Of the trips across the SJB, studies have shown that only 18% are local trips and the remaining 82% travel to and/or from destinations outside the Borough. The Bridge is therefore an important strategic route for the region, linking Merseyside, Cheshire and Greater Manchester and the motorway network (M56 and M62) as well as providing an alternative crossing to the M6 Thelwall Viaduct. The SJB acts as gateway for international travel by providing a link from the west and south of the region to Liverpool John Lennon Airport and lies on the most direct road route between Liverpool and Manchester airports. In terms of public transport, the SJB gives access to Runcorn Rail Station (West Coast Mainline, Liverpool-London and Liverpool-Birmingham services) and is essential for cross-river bus services. The strategic importance of the SJB cannot be overemphasised and tackling congestion on the SJB is the key transport priority for the Borough.

Congestion also occurs at peak times on the approaches to Junction 12 of the M56 (Clifton Interchange); along the A557 Watkinson Way (Widnes Eastern Bypass); and at the junction between the A56/A558 (Chester Road/Eastern Expressway) near Daresbury. These congestion ‘hotspots’ are all on main routes that eventually feed into the SJB.

Two major schemes will deliver the proposed solution to tackle congestion on the SJB; the Mersey Gateway scheme is a £431 million project (March 2007 prices) to provide a new tolled crossing together with modifications to the SJB to provide for local trips with improved facilities for public transport, walking and cycling. The second major scheme comprises a programme of maintenance work for the SJB required to slow the deterioration of the structures, bring the condition up to a steady state and enable continued use of the bridge.

Halton is a small, compact urban area and during LTP1, with the exception of the ‘hotspots’ previously described on the SJB and strategic routes, it has experienced only low levels of traffic congestion. However, recent evidence indicates that the successful regeneration of the town centres of Runcorn and Widnes has increased the demand for travel and congestion is beginning to appear at key points. One example is the junction of Kingsway/Milton Road, Widnes where significant levels of congestion are being experienced along with resultant poor air quality. LTP2 recognised the need to implement measures to tackle congestion and these were set out in the Action Plan for Congestion contained in LTP2.

identified that the key economic challenge is to improve the performance of the existing network and recommended that the focus should be on growing and congested urban areas and catchments; key interurban corridors; and key international gateways. In response to addressing the challenges in these areas, he identified the need for a new policy mix including pricing is required together with targeting of new infrastructure to the focus areas and pinch-points. The Mersey Gateway together with the associated SJB scheme include many of these elements: targeting new infrastructure to a key pinch point; improving performance of the existing network; and introducing pricing through tolls. The remainder of the schemes in Halton’s Action Plan focus on a variety of measures, which combine making the most of the existing networks with encouraging modal shift to public transport, walking and cycling.

2.2. Actions taken, Case Studies and Partnership Working

LTP2 set out an Action Plan for Tackling Congestion and implementing Network Management Duties during the 5-year period from 2006/07 to 2010/11. Appendix C provides a summary of actions undertaken during 2006/07 and 2007/08; relevant actions are highlighted with the symbol:

![VMS with ANPR camera, Bridgewater Expressway](image)

**Halton Borough Council is working closely with Cheshire Police to explore new ways of utilising data from Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras.** In 2008, an initiative to introduce cameras at selected fixed-sites in Halton to feed back real-time information on journey times for the strategic route across the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB). The journey time information will ultimately be deployed on Variable Message Signs (VMS) which were installed in Halton during 2007 using funding from LTP2, and on the Council website. The installation will help enable drivers to make informed decisions about their journey. The scheme has been developed in partnership with Cheshire Police who will be supplying real-time data from ANPR cameras on the approaches to the SJB. Halton Borough Council has also installed supplementary ANPR cameras to cover most of the main roads leading to the SJB. If in the future, the Council hopes to extend the scheme to cover other locations and provide journey time information on cross-authority journeys into Liverpool and Warrington. The scheme makes use of ANPR and VMS infrastructure and shows how efficient use of existing resources and data sharing between partners can be used to help tackle traffic congestion. In addition, the ANPR scheme also has wider operational benefits for the Council and the Police. ANPR cameras are separate to speed enforcement cameras and will not be used to enforce speed limits within the Borough.

**Halton Borough Council has also installed cameras at the key pinch point; improving performance of the existing network; and introducing pricing through tolls.** The remainder of the schemes in Halton’s Action Plan focus on a variety of measures, which combine making the best use of existing networks with encouraging modal shift to public transport, walking and cycling.

**The Mersey Gateway project and associated SJB schemes are crucial to tackling congestion and encouraging the use of sustainable transport in Halton.** Halton Borough Council is working with the Clifford consultancy to develop a Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy covering the period 2010/11 to 2031/32. The draft strategy sets out how the proposed Mersey Gateway project and de-linking of the SJB can encourage sustainable transport in the Borough and enable interventions and initiatives to be developed to support the regeneration and economic aspirations. As part of the work behind the strategy, consultants arranged focus group meetings to discuss transport issues and the results of the discussions have helped to shape the strategy. Output from the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy will include an action plan identifying outline costs and potential sources of funding. Officers from across Halton Borough Council have been involved in the study and links are being developed between the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy and the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy, the emerging Halton Local Development Framework (LDF) and future Local Transport Plans (LTPs).

**The Traffic Management Act (2004) introduced a new duty on local transport authorities to manage their road networks and secure the expeditious movement of traffic so far as is reasonably practical. Actions proposed in the Traffic Management Act include making more efficient use of the road network and the avoidance, elimination or reduction of road congestion or other disruption to the movement of traffic.**

As part of its Network Management Duties, Halton appointed a Traffic Manager in January 2005 and has since carried out an initial assessment drawing upon local knowledge, of congestion hotspots and their locations. Two of the locations (ASS7 Watkinson Way/A557 Fiddlers Ferry Road in Widnes and A556/AS56 Daresbury near Runcorn) are already being addressed by the Council’s Network Management Team and are due to be completed by September 2008. A number of the remaining hotspots including the ASS7 Clifton and Speke Road will be addressed by the Mersey Gateway scheme and mitigation measures. There are also three other junctions in Widnes that now regularly experience congestion in the form of queues that take one or more signal cycles to disperse. These are the closely located junctions of Kingsway/Milton Road, Kingsway/Leigh Avenue and Leigh Avenue/Lowerhouse Lane. Significant queues can build up on one or more approaches to these junctions in the peak hours or throughout the day on a Saturday. It is proposed that MOVA software be installed at all three junctions to reduce queues and delays. This software (Microprocessor Optimised Vehicle Activation) assess traffic conditions at the junction and adjusts signal timings accordingly to maximise capacity and reduce queueing. Studies to prove that ‘MOVA’ would produce benefits have been undertaken for these sites and it is proposed that installation will commence in 2008.

The main hotspot for network management is the SJB, which due to high traffic flows, limited road space and lack of alternative routes is often badly affected by relatively minor incidents. Whilst the Mersey Gateway is being developed as a long-term solution, interim efforts have concentrated on improving information about incidents on the SJB and its approaches. Four CCTV cameras were initially installed at either end of the Bridge and these have been supplemented by a further two cameras on the Runcorn approach. Real-time ‘snapshots’ from the cameras can be viewed by the public on Halton Borough Council’s website and Trafficlink (who supply information to travel news on radio, television and websites) have access to the cameras. The Council is exploring the feasibility of installing further cameras at sites, including the ASS7/AS56 Widnes, AS57/MS56 Junction 12, Clifton (North) and the Runcorn approach to SJB, but is experiencing difficulties in providing the necessary communication links whilst keeping revenue costs low.

In the late 1990’s ‘flag’ signs with a facility for adding messages using magnetic characters were installed at five locations on the approach to the SJB. These signs worked well for advising drivers of planned works but were difficult to use for incidents. Under LTP2, a scheme was therefore developed to install Variable Message Signs (VMS) on the approaches to the SJB. Six signs were initially installed in 2007 (three on each side of the Bridge) and a further two signs were added in late 2007. Halton Borough Council has ensured that the VMS are compatible with systems used by neighbouring authorities so that, as suitable communication and security systems become available, they can become part of a shared network. Initially the messages displayed on the VMS were set using terminals within the Network Management Section at Halton Borough Council. However, the service was subsequently developed to cover out of office hours incidents through the use of pre-determined messages which can be initiated by the Council’s Contact Centre. The Contact Centre staff who operate 24 hours/7 days a week also have access to the SJB cameras and can respond to questions about conditions on the Bridge.
for closing their bridges to certain types of vehicles. Due to the lack of data on the effect of wind on vehicles, Halton Borough Council has commissioned the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) to carry out a desktop study into critical wind speeds and has installed an anemometer on the Runcorn approach of the SB to assist in making decisions about closing the Bridge to certain vehicles types. The anemometer feeds data back to HBC offices and a common database has been purchased to enable the VMS to be set automatically when predetermined wind speeds are reached. Data from the anemometer will also be shared with the Environmental Health Division at Halton to help with pollution monitoring. When it is necessary to close the Bridge to high-sided vehicles, Halton Borough Council’s officers discuss and agree the decision with Cheshire Police and Warrington Borough Council. Liaison also takes place with the Highways Agency who sets its VMS when they are not required to display other messages, to warn drivers of the closure. Trafficlink, who supply information to travel news on radio, television and websites, are also kept informed.

NETWORK MANAGEMENT DUTY CASE STUDY 3: ROADWORKS & CO-ORDINATED LANE CLOSURES

Providing accurate and up-to-date information about roadworks and road closures to road-users is a key part of Halton’s approach to Network Management. The Council’s website provides details of all roadworks being undertaken, including potential lane closures required by the Council, which results in an increased quality of service for road users through reduced disruption and delay, improved standards of service, and potential traffic management cost savings for the Council. At the beginning of each year a meeting is held to discuss the work requirements of each service and agree a programme of closures. On some occasions it has been necessary to close roads completely to carry out work but generally this has resulted in the work being completed more quickly and in greater safety. To improve the standard of traffic management on the network, traffic management measures are required to be installed, maintained and removed by registered Sector 12 operatives.

TACKLING CONGESTION & NETWORK MANAGEMENT DUTIES: PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Building relationships with other Network Operators & Statutory Undertakers

Halton is working to develop better relationships with network operators including neighbouring local authorities and the Highways Agency (HA). Greater levels of joint working are being encouraged and we are keen to establish protocols for the sharing of data. Halton Borough Council is a member of the Merseywide Group of Traffic Managers and a founder member of the North West Group of Traffic Managers; Halton’s Traffic Manager is also currently chairman of North West Group. Regular meetings are held with neighbouring authorities, HBC internal departments and statutory undertakers to help co-ordinate works. Halton is developing its internal ‘notice-of-works’ system to ensure parity with systems used by utility companies. The internal system is already operational for street lighting works and other departments are in the process of being added. A Trafficlink interface to the VMS works system to the HBC website is being developed to enable members of the public to view the information; this will also help staff in our Contact Centre answer queries. Discussions have also taken place with media organisations (e.g. Trafficlink) and the National Traffic Control Centre (NTCC) to improve information provided to the travelling public.

Delivering of Major Structural Maintenance Programmes for Bridges through Public Private Partnership

Halton Borough Council has been successful in securing additional Primary Route Network (PRN) funding largely to support a programme of maintenance work on the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SB) and its associated complex of structures. The PRN funding, awarded as part of the 2008/09 LTP settlement for Halton, totals £14.3 million over a three-year period. The scale of the work and programme constraints meant that delivery through a partnering approach will be more effective than the traditional method of engaging contractors on a scheme-by-scheme basis. Halton have commissioned consultants Mott MacDonald to prepare an Option report for the ‘Delivery of Bridge Maintenance Activity through Partnering Agreements’ as the first step towards establishing a public/private partnership for the work.

Managing Parking through Partnership

Work during the first two years of LTP2 has focussed on gaining a better understanding of parking in the Borough and options for future management. Consultants Mott MacDonald, with the support of the Mersey Gateway Company, have been working on a number of projects to develop proposals for a more effective parking system in Halton. This work includes the development of an internal ‘notice-of-works’ system to ensure parity with systems used by utility companies. The internal system is already operational for street lighting works and other departments are in the process of being added. A Trafficlink interface to the street lighting works system to the HBC website is being developed to enable members of the public to view the information; this will also help staff in our Contact Centre answer queries. Discussions have also taken place with media organisations (e.g. Trafficlink) and the National Traffic Control Centre (NTCC) to improve information provided to the travelling public.

2.3. IMPACT

The impact of actions to tackling congestion are currently monitored in LTP2 using the following agreed indicators:

Indicators: KEY OUTCOME

BPV1 223: % of Principal Road network in need of further investigation.

BPV1 224a: % of Classified Non-Principal Road network in need of further investigation.

BPV1 187: % of category 1, 1a & 2 footway networks, where structural maintenance should be considered. LTP5: % of bus stops (a) starting on time, (b) on time at intermediate timing point, (c) on time at non-timing point.

Indicators: INTERMEDIATE

BPV1 100: Number days of temporary traffic controls or road closure on traffic sensitive roads caused by local authority road works per km of traffic sensitive road.

BPV1 103: % of Users satisfied with local provision of public transport information.

BPV1 165: % of Pedestrian crossings with facilities for disabled people.

BPV1 178: % of total footpath and other Rights of Way network that is easy to use.

Indicators: CONTRIBUTING

L5: Number of Park & Ride spaces at local stations.

L6: Percentage of schools with School Travel Plans in place.

2008, the Merseylink & Halton FQP was given an award from the Freight Transport Association (FTA) in recognition of its work. Further information on the Merseylink & Halton FQP can be found on the website www.merseyfreight.org

Targets Met: Indicators that have shown improvement include key outcome indicator LTP5 (b) which shows 85% of buses arriving on-time at intermediate timing points compared to target of 79%. The increase is thought to be mainly due to the operator Arriva investing in on-vehicle GPS tracking.

Targets not Met: Indicators that failed to meet targets include key outcome indicator BPV1 187 and intermediate/contributory indicators BPV1 165, BPV1 178 and L5.

• BPV1 187 was measured at 23% in 2006/07, which met the target of 25% or less. However in 2007/8, BPV1 187 was reported to be 50%. This represents a significant level of failure and is double the target of 25%. The degree of change suggests discrepancy in data collected for the indicator and this is currently being investigated. In 2007, an accreditation scheme was introduced and contractor’s survey staff were required to complete competence tests; this may have also had an effect on 2007/08 results.
Table 2.1: Summary of Performance Against Congestion Related Targets

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Includes relevant mandatory indicators required by Government and any other indicators that, in the authorities opinion, directly measure the achievement of the four shared transport priorities.

KEY OUTCOME INDICATORS

- BVPI 223: Met in 2007/08
- BVPI 224a: Met in 2007/08
- BVPI 224b: Met in 2007/08
- BVPI 187: Met in 2006/07
- LTP5 (a): Met in 2007/08
- LTP5 (b): Met in 2007/08
- LTP5 (c): Met in 2007/08

INTERMEDIATE INDICATORS

- BVPI 100: Met in 2007/08
- BVPI 103: Met in 2007/08
- BVPI 165: Met in 2007/08
- BVPI 178: Met in 2007/08

CONTRIBUTORY INDICATORS

- L6
- L7
- L12
- L5

- BVPI 100: Met in 2007/08
- BVPI 103: Met in 2007/08
- BVPI 165: Met in 2007/08
- BVPI 178: Met in 2007/08

In the case of BVPI 165, recent changes in the criteria for crossings mean that the target could not be met and due to the costs involved, it is unlikely to be achieved in the remaining years of LTP2.

In the case of BVPI 178, the percentage of the total length of RoW that are easy to use and this indicator can be substantially affected if one of the longer paths fails. Two main factors have affected Halton’s figures for BVPI 178. The first is signing; although missing and damaged signs are replaced through the annual works programme, replacements are sometimes removed/damaged by the time the next survey takes place. The second is a small number of outstanding long-term legal/physical issues that relate to at least one of the longer paths and which will take time to resolve.

Targets On-Track: BVPI 103 ‘% of Users satisfied with local provision of public transport information’. This indicator is measured once every three years. In 2006/07 BVPI 103 was reported to be 55%, just missing the target for that year of 56.8%. However we believe this indicator is on-track to meet the next target of 58.8% in 2009/10.

• BVPI 103: Met in 2007/08
• BVPI 100: Met in 2007/08
• BVPI 165: Met in 2007/08
• BVPI 178: Met in 2007/08

In 2006/07 BVPI 103 = 55%, just missing target of 56.8%. We believe this indicator is on-track to meet next target of 58.8% in 2009/10.

• L5 is being addressed through an improvement scheme at Widnes station, and work is currently progressing to increase parking at the station by over 100 spaces. Virgin Trains are also undertaking improvements to car parking provision at Runcorn Station and construction is underway on a 510 space multi-storey car park.

• BVPI 224b not met in 2006/07
• BVPI 187 not met in 2007/08.
• LTP5 (c) not met in 2006/07
• BVPI 100: Met in 2007/08
• BVPI 103: Met in 2007/08
• BVPI 165: Met in 2007/08
• BVPI 178: Met in 2007/08.

• BVPI 103: Met in 2007/08
• BVPI 100: Met in 2007/08
• BVPI 165: Met in 2007/08
• BVPI 178: Met in 2007/08.

In 2006/07 BVPI 103 = 55%, just missing target of 56.8%. We believe this indicator is on-track to meet next target of 58.8% in 2009/10.

• BVPI 103: Met in 2007/08
• BVPI 100: Met in 2007/08
• BVPI 165: Met in 2007/08
• BVPI 178: Met in 2007/08.

In 2006/07 BVPI 103 = 55%, just missing target of 56.8%. We believe this indicator is on-track to meet next target of 58.8% in 2009/10.
2.4. Future Monitoring

Guidance on LTP2 Progress Reports published by the Department for Transport (DfT) recommends that all 2008 reports should include information on the 17 LTP mandatory core and Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI) and locally determined targets. Figures for the indicators at the end of 2006/07 and 2007/08 and targets appear in the tables in Appendix A of this report.

Future monitoring of indicators for LTP2 is being influenced by the new National Indicator (NI) set introduced from April 2008 in an attempt to simplify reporting and reduce the burden of data collection. LTP2 guidance suggests that the LTP2 interim review should be used as an opportunity to review future monitoring in light of the new NI set. Nine of the 17 mandatory LTP indicators have been included in the 198 National Indicators (NI) and so will continue to be reported but Local Authorities are urged to consider which of the remaining 8 indicators they propose to continue monitoring during the remaining LTP2 period.

Of the current LTP2 mandatory indicators linked to ‘Tackling Congestion’ 4 indicators, ‘Congestion – average journey time per mile during the morning peak’ (NI 167), BVPI 223 ‘Principal roads where maintenance should be considered’ (NI 168), BVPI 224a ‘Non-Principal classified roads where maintenance should be considered’ (NI 169) and BVPI 185 ‘Traffic Management’ (NI 171) are included in the new NI set. Halton currently reports indicators equivalent to NI 167, NI 168 and NI 171 but not NI 169, BVPI 223 ‘Congestion – average journey time per mile during the morning peak’. Calculation of NI 167 relies on journey-time data supplied by the Department for Transport (DfT) and the DfT has been confident that the version of the indicator used by the authority is sufficiently robust to represent a meaningful return. Journey-time data is gradually being rolled out from the DfT to authorities and at present Halton is not included in the group of authorities who receive data and is therefore unable to report BVPI 223 / NI 167.

The new national indicator set does not include a measure of footway condition as previously reported under BVPI 187. However, it is acknowledged that the condition of footways is a very valuable indicator, not only in terms of a measure of accessibility and safety, but also in the contribution that well maintained footways make to the appearance of local neighbourhoods and the level of public satisfaction. BVPI 187 has its limitations in that it reports only on a small percentage of the footway network, generally the higher use walking routes and busy shopping centres, with half of these routes being inspected each year. It is also relatively expensive to collect as the indicator is based on Detailed Visual Inspection surveys (DVI). BVPI 187 reports the percentage of surveyed footways that exceed a Condition Index (CI) of 20; this is set relatively low and can easily be triggered by minor defects such as cracked flags, minor depressions or surface fretting. The 2007/08 survey results showed a large increase in BVPI 187 but an analysis of the results and inspection has shown that a significant proportion of the footways exceeding the index do not require structural maintenance. To monitor footway condition in future years, Halton proposes to develop a new local performance indicator based upon visual surveys carried out as part of wider highway condition monitoring and that will report on the whole of Halton’s footway and footpath network. This local indicator would also be used as the basis for preparing the structural maintenance programme from 2009/10. Halton is seeking approval from Government Office North West to replace BVPI 187 for the final two years of LTP with this local footway condition indicator. The proposed local indicator is to carry a lower year-on-year comparison of footway condition across the whole network and will demonstrate trends in improvement or deterioration. It will have the advantage of taking account of the condition of all of the Borough’s walking routes, from the ‘garden gate’ to the town centre, rather than just a ‘static’ restricted sample, and will inform future maintenance programmes on a fair and equitable basis. As the proposed indicator will be local to Halton, it would not be comparable with BVPI 187 indicators that continue to be reported by other local authorities, however, it will be based upon standardised visual inspection techniques and will adopt a system of indexing to enable identification of those footways where ‘maintenance should be considered’, similar to the new national indicator Ni 168 for Principal Roads.

Halton intends that all other key outcome, intermediate and contributory indicators listed under ‘Tackling Congestion’ will continue to be collected and monitored for the remainder of LTP2. Changes to three targets for these indicators are proposed:

• BVPI 165 ‘% of Pedestrian crossings with facilities for disabled people’ has a baseline figure of 95% in 2003/4, and a target of 100% for each LTP year from 2006/7 onwards. Changes to the required criteria at crossings now mean that the percentage has slipped below that of the base year: to 87.8% in 2006/07 and 67.4% in 2007/08. A review has been undertaken of the likely level of performance against this indicator for the remaining years of LTP2 and has concluded that without additional specific funding, the situation is unlikely to improve. Halton therefore is proposing that the target for BVPI 165 is set to 67% for the remaining years of LTP2.

• Key outcome indicator LTP5 (b) has shown considerable improvement during the first two years of LTP2, due mainly to investment by one of the main bus operators in GPS tracking. For the remaining years of LTP2, Halton therefore proposes to increase the targets for this indicator, from 80.5% to 85.2% for 2008/09, 82.3% to 86.2% for 2009/10 and from 84.0% to 87.0% to 2010/11.

All other relevant targets remain as shown in the original LTP2 document.

2.5. Use of LTP Resources Towards ‘Tackling Congestion’ and ‘Network Management Duties’

LTP CAPITAL SPEND (2006/07-2007/08) ON MEASURES THAT HELP PREVENT/TACKLE CONGESTION.

LTP CAPITAL SPEND (2006/07-2007/08) ON MEASURES THAT ENCOURAGE MODAL SHIFT AND CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS TACKLING CONGESTION.

HALTON’S REVENUE SPEND (2006/07-07/08) ON MEASURES THAT HELP PREVENT/TACKLE CONGESTION.

LTP CAPITAL SPEND (2006/07-2007/08) ON MEASURES THAT HELP PREVENT/TACKLE CONGESTION.
The pie charts attempt to show how Council spending during the two-year period has contributed towards achieving the priority. However it is important to note that the same areas of spend will appear under more than one priority and that the sum of the amounts shown under each priority will be greater than the actual total capital and revenue funding for transport available to the authority. A summary of LTP capital and Halton revenue spend for 2006/07 and 2007/08 is provided in Section 9 and this shows that a total of £8,534,000 capital and £16,971,000 revenue was spent over the two years. Some entries for revenue spend shown in the charts include spending on items such as staff salaries, premises costs, equipment, and support services.

2.6. RISK ASSESSMENT: OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

Good progress has been made during the first two years of LTP2 on a variety of schemes and initiatives that either help to prevent congestion through ensuring that the highway network remains available or tackle congestion by encouraging greater use of sustainable transport alternatives.

Congestion on the SJB and on the approaches to the SJB remains the key issue for the Borough. In terms of opportunities, our impact on this area of work over the remaining years of LTP2 will increase, due in part to additional funding received from the RN Roads and Bridges allocation in the 2008/09 LTP settlement. A total of £14.3m has been made available largely for urgent required maintenance works to the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB) and its associated complex of structures between 2008/09 and 2010/11. The funding required to maintain the SJB has been the subject of serious concern for Halton and one that could have led to measures being taken to reduce the volume of traffic using the Bridge. The PRN funding will assist in securing a steady state of maintenance on the structure and therefore reduce the risk of losing this key local and regional strategic link. However, it must be noted that further funding is still required from the Major Schemes Programme to complete the SJB works and a decision is still awaited on the business case that Halton submitted to the DfT in March 2006. The uncertainty over this future funding from the Major Schemes Programme for essential works still poses a serious threat to our ability to tackle congestion.

In coming years, ongoing development of Widnes town centre is likely to lead to an increase in traffic flows, putting pressure on the network. Signs of potential problems are already occurring at key junctions referred to earlier in ‘Network Management Duties Case Study 1’.

In the longer term, the Mersey Gateway and associated SJB maintenance and modification schemes form the core of Halton’s solution to tackle congestion. The Mersey Gateway project has progressed well, with key target dates being met in 2008 for the submission of Planning and Transport & Works Acts applications and the project remains on-track. The next crucial stage will be the Public Inquiry due to commence in late 2008, with the results due in late 2009. As with all projects of this scale and complexity there remains an element of risk and failure or delay in the schemes would fundamentally threaten Halton’s overall ability to tackle congestion.

2.7. RISK ASSESSMENT: Barriers & Obstacles

LTP2 identified five principal road maintenance schemes forming a prioritised programme of work for the period up to 2010/11. The top priority scheme, reconstruction of the A56 at Preston Brook, was completed in 2007. However, the level of available annual funding has not been sufficient to implement the remaining schemes, each valued at over £400,000. In order to address surface deterioration and loss of skidding resistance, the lengths of Expressways identified in the programme have been surface dressed and no recent scanner information no longer lists these carriageways as requiring immediate attention. Maintaining condition of these roads in the longer term is still an issue but traffic flows are predicted to reduce to around 20% of existing levels with the opening of the proposed Mersey Gateway. Condition of these roads will continue to be monitored and reported over the remaining years of LTP2.

An obstacle often encountered in delivering ‘Tackling Congestion’ is the continuing scarcity of highway engineers who have sufficient skills and experience. This problem continues to be addressed by utilising framework consultants to supplement design resources during peaks in demand.

A significant issue is the lack of revenue funding available to undertake softer measures that enable and actually encourage greater use of sustainable travel and so help tackle congestion. These measures include road safety education, training and publicity (RSET&P); travel training; information on transport services; personalised travel plans and publicity as well as funding to provide new or experimental bus services. Even if funding can be found, it is largely secured on a temporary basis and the initiative eventually either has to be incorporated into limited core budgets at the expense of something else or terminated. These softer measures are increasingly recognised as key to developing the necessary step changes required in travel behaviour to achieve sustainable and modal shift, however the intermittent funding mechanisms fail to maximise opportunities when they arise and consequently reduce effectiveness. Revenue funding and capital funding is required both now and in the future to enable Halton to implement measures that encourage use of sustainable transport and achieve modal shift. Securing sufficient funding for the successful delivery of the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy and the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy will be particularly crucial for tackling congestion in the longer term.

Cycle training is one particular area in Halton where problems are being experienced and yet this is a key part in securing our modal shift objectives. Despite continued efforts to secure an effective and reliable source of instructors for the new national training standard, the use of outside providers and key partner staff has proved unworkable and cycle training grants have had to be returned unspent. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of courses offered rather than the increase required to meet the growth in demand. It is genuinely felt that all feasible options have been explored and that in order to make progress towards targets, it will be necessary to employ full-time in-house trainers to lead and co-ordinate this work.

2.8. RISK: OVERALL ASSESSMENT

Overall assessment of risk: Green

Good progress has been made so far during LTP2 on ‘Tackling Congestion’. Of the relevant indicators, 86% of key outcome indicators, 50% of intermediate indicators and 75% of contributory indicators have been met or are on-track to be met. Over the remaining three years of LTP2, expanding use of VMS together with the PRN funding secured for maintenance will help to manage congestion on the SJB although further funding from the Major Schemes Programme is still required. Away from the SJB, surface dressing of four principal roads has addressed key issues of road condition in the short-term. During 2008/09, work will continue on development of the Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) and with regard to network management, as the case studies show there is increasingly strong partnership working and examples of practical co-ordination of works. The main threats to future progress arise from possible lack of funding from the Major Schemes Programme for the SJB and a lack of revenue funding for softer measures, both of which largely fall outside HBC’s control. Possible risks arising from a shortage of staff with necessary skills and experience are being addressed by HBC through use of the consultants’ framework agreement.

In the longer term, the success of Halton’s strategy to tackle congestion rests with the Mersey Gateway (MG) scheme, the associated SJB modifications & SJB maintenance schemes, and the implementation of the MG Sustainable Transport and Regeneration Strategies. Although considerable work will take place progressing these schemes during the remainder of LTP2, their impact on tackling congestion will fall beyond the end of LTP2 (2010/11). For this reason, they have been excluded from the overall assessment of risk. However failure or delay in delivering any of these schemes will fundamentally affect Halton’s long-term ability to tackle congestion.
3.0 DELIVERING ACCESSIBILITY INCLUDING PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY (PROW)

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Accessibility is a cross-cutting theme and is recognised as a crucial component of Halton’s Community Strategy:

‘People make places work, and all the communities and facilities of Halton (jobs, schools, town centres, health) need to be well connected and well served by the transport network. We need appropriate levels of car parking in the right places, a well managed and maintained road network and a properly functioning public transport network to help people get around and reduce car dependency. We need to further develop opportunities for walking and cycling, and ensure our connection to the outside world through motorways, railways, ports and airports remain excellent.’

A Community Strategy for a Sustainable Halton 2006-2011

‘Delivering Accessibility supports many of the aims and objectives from the Community Strategy and specifically:

• Improving access to services such as social and leisure facilities, supermarkets, health services and transport’ (A Healthy Halton)

• To create a vibrant and accessible borough’ (Halton’s Urban Renewal)

• To ensure that in Halton, children and young people ... receive their entitlement to high quality services that are sensitive to need, inclusive and accessible to all’ (Children & Young People in Halton)

• To ensure pleasant, safe, secure neighbourhood environments’ (A Safer Halton)

The ease with which trips can be made, how they are made and how they are catered for, strongly influences the places in which we live, work and relax. It is therefore important that the decisions made help to shape places to ensure accessibility.

During LTP1, Halton earned a good track record for implementing a wide and innovative range of measures to improve accessibility. Measures introduced under LTP1 included establishing the Council’s innovative Neighbourhood Travel Team (NTT), targeting improvements to local public transport, providing core funding for Halton Community Transport (HCT), providing revenue support to facilitate a range of socially necessary bus service links and targeting improvements to ensure access to education, training and work-based learning for 16-19 year olds. In LTP2 Halton pledged that the Council and its partners would seek to ensure that everyone living, working and visiting the Borough enjoys convenient, affordable and safe access to a wide range of everyday facilities including healthcare, employment, education, training, affordable retailing & fresh food, leisure facilities and the countryside.

To accompany LTP2, Halton and its partners have developed a comprehensive Access Plan. An extensive study mapping access to facilities and neighbourhoods was carried out for the Access Plan and this revealed several general opportunities to improve accessibility in the Borough. These opportunities included: (i) improving the availability of public transport through introducing flexible transport services, bus priority measures and co-ordination of the timing of public transport services; (ii) improving and maintaining routes and facilities making them more usable; (iii) ensuring that transport vehicles meet the technical requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2004 (DDA); (iv) ensuring that the introduction of accessible vehicles is complemented by infrastructure improvements, travel training and appropriate access policies and; (v) allocating well designed and appropriately located parking for disabled car users. The Access Plan went on to clearly identify a wide range of short, medium and longer term accessibility improvements for key communities within the Borough and these have informed the development of the LTP2 Action Plan for delivering accessibility.

LTP2 also stressed the need to develop, improve and promote Public Rights of Way (PRoW), footway, cycling and Greenway networks to meet identified needs and improve accessibility. In 2003 Halton published a PRoW Milestone Statement setting out the Authority’s approach to ensure PRoW are legally defined, properly maintained and well publicised. Progress towards the Milestone Statement was reviewed in 2006 and an update report published. In addition to the work carried out to develop, improve and promote PRoW, a key task throughout 2006/07 and 2007/8 has been the formulation of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP). HBC will now look at how the Milestone Statement & the RoWIP can be linked to facilitate effective delivery and monitoring. Work on the RoWIP is nearing completion and HBC hope to have the document formally adopted by the end of 2008/09. Further information on the RoWIP programme and progress can be found under Action 6 in Appendix C.

The Greenway network comprises mainly off-highway routes connecting facilities in urban areas and the countryside and is used for commuting, essential and leisure trips by cyclists, walkers and where appropriate, horse riders. Halton has an ongoing programme for a network of Greenways utilising quiet roads, PRoW, canal towpaths and bridleways based on the results of a previously commissioned Greenways study.

Within Halton, the use of powered 2 wheelers (motorcycles and scooters) can play an important part in ensuring...
accessibility for individuals. Halton Borough Council is aware of the role that the Council has in delivering ‘The Government’s Motorcycling Strategy’ (2005). Within the Borough, the focus has been on provision of motorcycle parking and improving safety for motorcycle users (see ‘Safer Roads: Partnership Working’ for details).

Appendix I ‘Transport Parking Standards’ in the saved policies of the Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) states that ‘Provision of motorcycle parking should be made within each large development site, defined as a site with a total of 25 or more car parking spaces. The standard for this is one motorcycle space for every 25 car parking spaces’.

3.2. Actions taken, Case Studies and Partnership Working

Appendix C provides a summary of actions undertaken during 2006/07 and 2007/08 which contributed to ‘Delivering Accessibility including Public Rights of Way’. Relevant actions are highlighted with the symbol:

The following case studies outline key achievements and their impact on individuals.

DELIVERING ACCESSIBILITY CASE STUDY 1: LINKS2WORK

Transport can be a significant barrier for people accessing employment in industrial areas. Halton Borough Council introduced supported bus services but found that a number of people who worked shifts still had problems with transport and a different solution was required. Links2Work is a discounted taxi scheme for people who have no other alternative options for getting to and from work. Potential users can phone or e-mail the Neighbourhood Travel Team (NTT) direct or can be referred from JobCentre Plus, Recruitment Agencies or supported employment services such as Halton People into Jobs. Journeys are booked through the Council’s ‘Halton Direct Link’ one-stop shops or by phoning the 24-hr contact centre and cost £3 for a single and £5 for a return journey. Links2Work is offered as a short-term solution for people to initially access or remain in employment and the service is reviewed after 8 weeks with support provided to identify alternatives such as car sharing.

David’s Story: David works shifts on Whitehouse Industrial Estate, Runcorn. He normally travels to work by scooter but in April it broke down and he didn’t have the money to replace it. As David had no other means of getting to work, he phoned ‘Exchange People’, a local recruitment agency to see if he could find another job. The agency referred David to Links2Work and he booked the service over the phone. This enabled David to continue in his job while the scooter was fixed and to save for a new scooter. David says that without Links2Work he would have risked becoming unemployed whilst he searched for another job.

DELIVERING ACCESSIBILITY CASE STUDY 2: INDEPENDENT TRAVEL TRAINING (ITT)

Through the work of the Neighbourhood Travel Team (NTT), it was established that many people are unable or unwilling to use personal transport for reasons which included lack of confidence; poor literacy and numeracy; unfamiliarity with services; and learning difficulties and/or disabilities. To help address this an Independent Travel Trainer was appointed in July 2005 and asked to devise a Travel Training programme to support people, and particularly young people with disabilities and learning difficulties, to gain the essential skills needed to access public transport. The programme has proved very successful and Halton’s travel trainer’s knowledge and experience has been passed on to organisations and individuals both locally and nationally through initiatives such as ‘Train the Trainer’ interactive workshops/courses.

Sarah’s Story: Sarah is 17 years old and lives in Widnes. During Year 11 at school, her classroom assistant referred her to the Travel Training Project. Sarah was brought to school every day by car and it was felt that Travel Training would increase her independence, boost her self-esteem and enable her to attend post-16 education at College. Sarah’s Mum initially had her doubts but met with Halton’s Travel Trainer and decided to give it a go. The Travel Trainer worked with Sarah during her last term at school and Sarah’s Mum says it made a big difference; ‘Over a few months Sarah seemed to mature and gain a confidence that she had never had before.’ Sarah is now in her second year of A Levels at Riverside College and travels by bus to the Cronton and Kingsway campuses. She also takes her sisters into town most weekends. Sarah says ‘It’s been really good being able to get out to places with my mates. I go to Runcorn lots to see friends and go shopping and I’m hoping to go to Liverpool soon’.

DELIVERING ACCESSIBILITY CASE STUDY 3: YOUNG PERSON’S HOPPER

Cost of travel, particularly when using different bus operators’ services, has been identified as a major barrier to people accessing employment, education, training and health services. In June 2006, Halton Borough Council launched the Halton Hopper weekly multi-operator ticket covering virtually every bus service within the Borough. In January 2007, a student version of the Hopper ticket was released and offered at a discounted rate by Riverside College to support people accessing the college. More recently the Young Person’s Hopper has been integrated into an Activity Agreement Pilot (AAP) scheme operated by Connexions Greater Merseyside. Connexions Personal Advisors are able to provide the Hopper free of charge to young people who are not in education, training or employment to support them in accessing opportunities.

Darren’s Story: Darren had been unemployed since leaving school, having applied for a number of vacancies without success. Joining the AAP scheme allowed Darren to access a variety of training courses: ‘The Hopper ticket allowed me to go to activities all over Halton and I’ve passed courses in manual handling, employability skills, confidence building and problem solving and I got the mountain bike leaders award. It also gave me freedom to visit my friends in Widnes’. After successfully completing the Employability Skills course, Darren became eligible for the ‘Job Ready Scheme’ which gives participants the opportunity to a 12-week placement with a prospective employer. After a successful interview, Darren was delighted to find that he had secured a placement with a local plumbing company. ‘I feel much more confident and motivated. My Personal Advisor and the Hopper card gave me the opportunity to get experience in the working environment and I’ve got an opportunity to prove myself. I’m not going to waste it!’

DELIVERING ACCESSIBILITY CASE STUDY 4: RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (ROWIP)

The RoWIP includes an assessment of the Public Rights of Way (ProW) network in Halton and a statement of action proposed by the local authority for securing an improved network and the management of local rights of way. A survey of ProW users and members of the public for the RoWIP was completed in early 2008, and the document is currently in the final stages of production. The RoWIP has taken longer to develop than first anticipated but the revised timescale is for the document to be formally adopted by the end of 2008/09.

DELIVERING ACCESSIBILITY: PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Widnes Waterfront EDZ Sustainable Travel Project

The Widnes Waterfront EDZ sustainable travel project started in April 2003 and is scheduled to finish in September 2008. The total cost of the sustainable travel project is £1.6m and the capital element of the project is being funded jointly by the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NRDA) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The capital element includes the provision of around 5km of signed Greenways to provide walking and cycling links from the site to areas of deprivation, crossing facilities at major roads, and cycle lockers/stands to allow for interchange at railway and bus stations. Funding for the revenue element of the project has been secured from the NRDA, ERDF, Halton

Old Town. At the start of LT2, the route was narrow and overgrown; the surface was in poor condition, and there were problems with misuse/anti-social behaviour. During 2007/08 through the Greenway initiative, 2 metres of additional land alongside the path was obtained from The Heath School which enabled widening and erection of a palisade fence to improve security. Vegetation was cut back, the surface of the path was improved and bollards were erected at either end of the route to prevent entry by cars. The next stage of the project is the change the status of the route from footpath to shared-use footpath/cycle track and this is due to be completed by the end of 2008/09.

DELIVERING ACCESSIBILITY CASE STUDY 5: MALPAS ROAD TO HEATH ROAD GREENWAY

The Malpas Road to Heath Road Greenway provides an important PROW link between the Halton Lodge area of Runcorn and Higher Runcorn/Runcorn

Old Road to Heath Road Greencay: during construction
At the end of 2007/08, overall passenger numbers on HCT services showed an increase of 20% over the previous year. The increase has mainly been due to the introduction of the new vehicles but HBC’s continuing support of services to the Runcorn Independent Living centre, transport for post 16 college students with learning difficulties, and inter-site college shuttle movements have also contributed. The “Women’s Safe Transport” scheme witnessed a drop in patronage in 2007/08 which reflects a reduction in the number of female learners registered with Riverside College using the scheme. HCT is working closely with Riverside College to promote the “Women’s Safe Transport” service to the new learner intake in September 2008.

The accessible services operated by HCT are currently being integrated into a new ‘Door 2 Door’ service to be launched in July 2008. Dial-a-Ride vehicles have been livered with the ‘Door2Door logo’ and integration of HCT’s services within the new ‘Door2Door’ service have commenced with data transfer and testing of the new centralised passenger booking & vehicle scheduling software.

Groundwork Merseyside projects Groundwork is an environmental regeneration charity that delivers projects through local trusts. ‘Groundwork Merseyside’ trust is one of the largest environmental charities in the UK and works closely with Groundwork Merseyside on a number of projects including ‘Green Links’, a project to develop crucial connecting green infrastructure such as footpaths, cycleways and greenways. Working in partnership with Groundwork brings additional value to the projects; particularly in the involvement of local communities, volunteers and supported learning programmes, and with securing external funding. Projects undertaken by Groundwork Merseyside during 2006/7 and 2007/08 include improvements to: Widnes footpath No. 75, Widnes footpath No. 69 (including reinstatement of the definitive line), Widnes footpath No. 29 and Daresbury footpath No. 4.

Local Access Forums The Countrywide & Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW) introduced a duty for local highway authorities to establish a Local Access Forum (LAF) for their area. Evaluation of the LAFs focus on issues of particular local relevance in relation to: rights of way; recreation and access strategies; and access restrictions. Halton is a member of the Merseyside Local Access Forum who host four meetings a year that are open to members of the public to attend. In recognition of the importance of Halton’s PRoW in cross-boundary trips, Halton also attends the Cheshire Local Access Forum as an observer.

Cycling benchmarks Halton Borough Council is one of 10 local authorities in the North West who participate in the Cycle Touring Club’s (CTC) Regional Cycle Benchmarking scheme. Benchmarking visits encourage participants to identify examples of best practice in cycling provision in their region. The benefits of the benchmarking scheme include: sharing ideas and best practice; encouraging a structured approach to evaluating schemes which includes peer review; developing strong networking relationships; raising the profile of cycling within authorities; and helping participants gain confidence, motivation and inspiration. Officers from Halton are active members of the North West benchmarking group and have found the scheme to be a useful tool. The benchmarking scheme is co-ordinated by the CTC and receives funding from Cycling England.

### 3.3. Impact

Under LTP2, the impact of Halton’s actions to deliver accessibility including public rights of way is monitored using the following indicators:

**Indicators: KEY OUTCOME**

**BVPI 102: Bus Passenger Journeys (’000’s).**

**BVPI 104: Satisfaction with local bus services.**

**BVPI 187: % of footway network where structural maintenance should be considered.**

**LTP1: Accessibility target: (A) % households without car in deprived wards within 40 mins travel time to Whiston hospital, (B) % households without car in deprived wards within 40 mins travel time to Warrington hospital, (C) % 16-19 learners in deprived wards within 30 mins travel time to Whiston Campus.**

**LTP3: Cycling trips (annualised index).**

**LTP4: Mode share of journeys to school.**

**Indicators: INTERMEDIATE**

**BVPI 100: Number of days of temporary traffic controls or road closure on traffic sensitive roads.**

**BVPI 103: % of Users satisfied with local provision of public transport information.**

**BVPI 165: % of Pedestrian crossings with facilities for disabled people.**

**BVPI 178: % of total footpath and other provision of public transport**

### COMENTARY ON PERFORMANCE

**Targets Met: Indicators that have shown considerable improvement include**

**LTP1 (A) and LTP1 (B).**

• In 2006/07 access to Whiston Hospital by conventional public transport remained static at 29% from the top five most deprived Wards. HBC has therefore provided a new “Hospital Link” service based on pre-bookable discounted fares. Any Halton resident wishing to visit family or friends admitted to Halton Hospital, Warrington Hospital, Royal Liverpool University Hospital, Countess of Chester Hospital, St Helens Hospital or Whiston Hospital can use this service if no public transport is available. The average journey time to Whiston Hospital by taxi is 30 minutes and hence the percentage for indicator LTP1 (A) rose to 100% in 2007/08. The targets for LTP1 (A) have been re-defined to 100% for the remaining years of LTP2. The “Hospital Link” service is also available to residents visiting family or friends in nursing/residential homes where no public transport is available. Patients who, due to a medical condition are unable to make their own way to hospital are eligible to use transport provided by the North West Ambulance Service to access appointments.

• The introduction by North Cheshire NHS Trusts of a new dedicated shuttle bus linking Halton Hospital to Warrington General Hospital has improved accessibility. In addition, Halton residents visiting family or friends are again eligible to use the new “Hospital Link” discounted taxi service. As a result LTP1 (B) increased to 100% in 2007/08 and targets have been re-defined to 100% for the remaining years of LTP2. It should be noted that the continuation of the “Hospital Link” service and the resulting high levels of accessibility are dependent on the future availability of funding.

• Halton BC is still working closely with the Hospital Trust and the bus operators to improve conventional public transport links from other areas of the Borough.
Another indicator that has shown considerable improvement since 2006/07 is L12: this is the result of the NTT service expanding in 2007/08 to include the Council’s Direct Link Call Centre which can now offer Personalised Travel Advice. The number of Personalised Journey Plans issued rose by 42% in 2007/08 compared to an increase of just 14% in 2006/07.

LTP4 ‘Mode share of journeys to school: share of journeys by car’ has also shown a small improvement, falling from a baseline of 34.7% in 2006/07 to 34.4% in 2007/08.

Targets Not Met: Indicators that failed to meet targets again include BVPI 165, BVPI 178 and L5 which are discussed under ‘Tackling Congestion & Network Management Duties’. In addition, key indicators BVPI 102, LTP1C, LTP1D, LTP3, and local indicator L11 have not been met.

BVPI 102 showed an unprecedented rise of 10% in 2006/07, probably due to the introduction of improved concessionary travel arrangements and new services by bus operator Arriva. This was followed by a disappointing 2% fall in local passenger journeys during 2007/8. With the introduction of the new national concessionary travel scheme in April 2008, we expect a further uplift in patronage. However forward projections may well have to be moderated if passenger journeys continue to fall during 2008/9.

LTP1C just met the target set for 2006/07 but failed to meet the target set for 2007/08. Absence of further DfT ‘Kickstart’ funding originally envisaged in the Access Plan has resulted in fewer enhancements to the commercial bus network. Targets for 2008/09 onwards have been re-profiled to reflect this.

LTP1D showed a similar pattern. Again, the absence of further DfT ‘Kickstart’ funding originally envisaged in the Access Plan has resulted in fewer enhancements to the commercial bus network and targets for 2008/09 onwards have been re-profiled to reflect this.

The target for cycling trips, indicator LTP3, was met in 2006/07 but not in 2007/08 when there was a reversal of the previous trend, with figures experiencing a small decline. Figures for 2007/08 may reflect the unusually poor weather experienced last summer when cycle count data was collected.

Local indicator L11 met the target for ‘Number of Replacement Bus Shelters’ in 2006/07 but missed the target in 2007/08. Most on-street sites that require replacement bus shelters have already been addressed through the LTP funded programme leaving only those on the Runcorn Busway to be replaced. A study is now underway to look at options to improve older shelters on the Busway and the results of the study will assist in the further development of the shelter replacement programme and inform any future revisions to targets.

Table 3.1: Summary of Performance Against Accessibility Targets

**KEY OUTCOME INDICATORS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>2006/07</th>
<th>2007/08</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BVPI 104</td>
<td>On-Track</td>
<td>On-Track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L10</td>
<td>Target Met</td>
<td>Target Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BVPI 102</td>
<td>Target Not Met</td>
<td>Target Not Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BVPI 187</td>
<td>Target Not Met</td>
<td>Target Not Met</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INTERMEDIATE INDICATORS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
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<th>2007/08</th>
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<td>Target Met</td>
<td>Target Met</td>
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<tr>
<td>L11</td>
<td>Target Met</td>
<td>Target Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L12</td>
<td>Target Not Met</td>
<td>Target Not Met</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CONTRIBUTORY INDICATORS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
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<th>2007/08</th>
</tr>
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<td>Target Not Met</td>
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<tr>
<td>L7</td>
<td>Target Not Met</td>
<td>Target Not Met</td>
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<tr>
<td>L10</td>
<td>Target Not Met</td>
<td>Target Not Met</td>
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<tr>
<td>L11</td>
<td>Target Met</td>
<td>Target Met</td>
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</tbody>
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Includes relevant mandatory indicators required by Government and any other indicators that, in the authorities opinion, directly measure the achievement of the four shared transport priorities.
3.4. FUTURE MONITORING

Guidance on LTP2 Progress Reports published by the Department for Transport (DfT) recommends that all 2008 reports should include information on the 17 LTP mandatory, core and Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI) and locally determined targets. Figures for the indicators at the end of 2006/07 & 2007/08 and targets appear in the tables in Appendix A of this report.

Future monitoring of indicators for LTP2 is being influenced by the new National Indicator (NI) set introduced from April 2008 in an attempt to simplify reporting requirements and reduce the burden of data collection. LTP2 guidance suggests that the LTP2 interim review should be used as an opportunity to review future monitoring in light of the need to simplify reporting. None of the 17 mandatory LTP indicators have been included in the 198 National Indicators (NI) and so will continue to be reported but Local Authorities are urged to consider which of the remaining 8 indicators they propose to continue monitoring during the remaining LTP2 period.

Of the current LTP2 mandatory indicators linked to ‘Accessibility’, BVPI 102 ‘Number of bus passenger journeys per year in the authority’ (NI 177), LTP4 A-D ‘Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling’ (NI 175), and LTP4 ‘Children travelling to school – mode of transport usually used’ (NI 198) are included in the new National Indicator set.

Indicator BVPI 187 has been discussed under ‘Tackling Congestion & Network Management’. BVPI 103 ‘Transport information’ is collected once every three years in accordance with DfT guidance. The data is difficult to collect, does not really differentiate between the views of non-users and non-users of public transport services and has little use beyond reporting BVPI 103. Halton therefore proposes to drop BVPI 103 for the remainder of LTP2. Data for BVPI 103 is next due to be collected in 2009/10. For all other key outcome, intermediate and contributory indicators HBC propose to maintain current collection and reporting for the remainder of LTP2.

With regard to targets, proposed revisions to targets for BVPI 165 & 178 have been detailed under ‘Tackling Congestion & Network Management’. Following 100% achievement in 2007/08, it is proposed that targets for LTP1 (A) and LTP2 (B) should be revised to 100% for the remaining years of LTP2. Targets for LTP1 (C) and LTP1 (D) are part of the Local Area Government (LAA) for Halton and have been updated for the LAA. Both indicators were originally allocated targets of 100% for 2008/09 onwards in LTP2; due to an absence of ‘Kickstart’ funding these have now been adjusted to 87% for BVPI 102, 88% and 89% for indicator LTP1 (C) and 91%, 92% and 93% for LTP1 (D). Figures from Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) show that LTP4 ‘Mode share of journeys to school: share of journeys by car’ met the 2007/08 target of 34.80%.

Targets for the remaining years of LTP2 have been adjusted slightly to reflect this and have been reduced from 34.6% (2008/09), 34.4% (2009/10) and 34.2% (2010/2011) to 34.4%, 34.2% and 34.0% respectively.

3.5. RISK ASSESSMENT: OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

Excellent progress was made during 2006/07 and 2007/8 towards ‘Delivering Accessibility’ and schemes such as ‘Hospital Link’, ‘Links2Work’ and ‘Young Person’s Hopper’ have improved access to employment, training and health care facilities. However, performance as measured by LTP accessibility indicators has shown slightly mixed results and in 2007/8 several indicators missed targets. There may be factors behind the results that are outside the Council’s control, for example poor summer weather which may have adversely affected the number of cycling trips during the period when counting took place. Continued monitoring during the remainder of LTP2 will help us to identify if results during 2007/08 were a ‘blip’ or if further action needs to be taken.

During 2007/08, Halton Borough Council (HBC) made significant progress towards the introduction of the new ‘Door 2 Door’ accessible transport scheme. 6 new fully accessible minibuses were purchased and additional equipment and software procured and installed for the passenger booking/vehicle scheduling system. Further opportunities during LTP2 are seen with the new door-to-door services facilitated by new vehicles and procurement software. This service forms a key initiative in the Access Plan for the Borough and involves:

- Improved integration of HBC and Halton Community Transport’s (HCT’s) accessible vehicle fleet;
- The purchase and installation of a new centralised vehicle scheduling and booking system;
- The purchase of new additional accessible vehicles using LTP capital funding to enhance both HBC and HCT’s existing fleets.

Promoting sustainable modes of transport, and particular walking and cycling, can have significant impact on helping tackle obesity; the British Medical Association has stated that cyclists have lower blood pressure levels, are less prone to heart attacks, have fewer respiratory complaints and lower obesity levels. North Cheshire NHS Hospital and the Widnes Health Resource Centre both run the ‘Travel Plans’ and support their staff to travel sustainably. HBC would like to work more closely with Halton and St Helens Primary Care Trust (PCT) to improve the health of those who live and work in the borough and this is an opportunity that will be pursued over the remaining years of LTP2.

Opportunities may also arise with discussions between HBC, Merseytravel and the five Merseyside District Authorities on the creation of a Liverpool City Region (LCR) and the development of an Integrated Transport Strategy and Action Plan in conjunction with the changes proposed within the Local Transport Bill (see Section 7.0 for further information).

In terms of threats, rising local bus service operating costs are affecting tender prices for socially necessary bus services funded by Halton Borough Council (HBC). Any continuing increases in fuel prices and operating costs may impact on the future ability of HBC to continue to offer the current wide range of supported bus services within the Borough. The Council has continued to fund the Access 200 Shuttle service which links key transport interchanges with employment areas in eastern Runcorn and which was originally introduced in 2002 using DfT Urban Bus Challenge funding. Tender prices for such services will increase if fuel and operating costs continue to rise.

Fuel prices are also a concern for voluntary sector operators such as Halton Community Transport (HCT). Fuel costs for HCT are currently around £600k per year. The bid, which was shortlisted by the DCSF for School Travel Pathfinder Status and Funding, was for a 3 year period when counting took place. Unfortunately all bids from local authorities on short-term contracts (such as in the School Travel Pathfinder initiative) and the short-term nature of funding creates barriers to progress.

Creating facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians can be subject to delay especially when changing the legal status of a path for example, from footway to combined footway/cycleway or bridleway. Authorities have to follow the appropriate legal process and this impacts on limited resources, legal fees adding to the cost of the scheme. Another difficulty is balancing the need for open access with the desire to deter crime and antisocial behaviour by installing barriers, gates or alley-gates.

Halton Borough Council (HBC) is currently advancing its proposals to refresh the way secondary education is delivered in the Borough through the ‘Building Schools for the Future’ initiative. This will involve the creation of a new academy in Runcorn and amalgamation of secondary schools within Widnes. If successfully implemented the initiative will generate

3.6. RISK ASSESSMENT: BARRIERS & OBSTACLES

Barriers experienced in delivering accessibility include difficulty in securing revenue funding. Revenue funding is required particularly for initiatives that support and enhance capital investment, this includes funding for the maintenance of Greenways and other walking, cycling and horse riding facilities and funding for initiatives to promote sustainable travel. Halton has sought to be flexible and innovative in its approach, for example securing Priorities funding for the ‘Links2Work’ service.

Funding for staff-posts can also prove problematic and several existing posts within the Neighbourhood Travel Team are on short-term contracts: this again creates uncertainty and increases the risk that skilled and experienced staff will be lost. The limited availability of revenue funding, the bidding style processes involved (such as in the School Travel Pathfinder initiative) and the short-term nature of funding creates barriers to progress.
significant changes to home-to-school travel patterns and HBC will seek to ensure through the LTP that these travel movements can be met wherever possible by sustainable travel choices. A positive development is the planned opening of new multi-faith school in Runcorn which will reduce the need for secondary school children wishing to access Church of England education provision to travel out of the Borough. During 2007/08 HBC also received approval to launch the first phase of offering 14-19 diplomas. The diplomas will begin to be taught from September 2008, with further diplomas starting in September 2009. Careful planning of the new diplomas has been required to ensure that all learning bases are fully accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.

Finally it needs to be recognised that there is a limit to what can be achieved through the planning system and Section 106 agreements to deliver accessibility. In order to provide a coherent and comprehensive walking/cycling/horse riding/public transport network, improvements to infrastructure and services are required which are beyond the scope of what can be secured solely through new developments.

3.7. RISK: OVERALL ASSESSMENT

Overall Assessment of Risk: Amber

Good progress has been made so far during LTP2 on ‘Delivering Accessibility. Of the relevant indicators, 44% of key outcome indicators, 67% of intermediate indicators and 67% of contributory indicators have been met or are on-track to be met. Innovative schemes such as ‘Hospital Link’, ‘Links2Work’, the ‘Halton Hopper’ and the ‘Young Person’s Hopper’ have improved access to key services and facilities. Further opportunities are likely to arise from the new vehicles and procurement software purchased using LTP2 funding and new door-to-door services. The development of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) and possible changes to governance of highway, traffic and transport services may also create opportunities in the future.

This priority does however face challenges in relation to (i) rising operating costs, (ii) the availability of revenue funding for services and supporting measures and, (iii) the demands being placed on existing revenue funding. High fuel prices are affecting both commercial bus operators and the voluntary sector and rising costs are likely to affect the provision of services. Revenue funding is already limited and will be facing additional demands created by enhanced assistance with home to school travel. For the reasons stated above, the overall risk assessment for this priority has been graded as amber.

The pie charts opposite attempt to show how Council spending during the two-year period has contributed towards achieving the priority. However it is important to note that the same areas of spend will appear under more than one priority and that the sum of the amounts shown under each priority will be greater than the actual total capital and revenue funding for transport available to the authority. A summary of LTP capital and Halton revenue spend for 2006/07 and 2007/08 is provided in Section 9 and this shows that a total of £8,534,000 capital and £16,971,000 revenue was spent over the two years. Some entries for revenue spend shown in the charts include spending on items such as staff salaries, premises costs, equipment, and support services.

3.8. USE OF LTP RESOURCES TOWARDS DELIVERING ACCESSIBILITY

LTP CAPITAL SPEND (2006/07-2007/08) ON MEASURES THAT DIRECTLY DELIVER ACCESSIBILITY & PROW

| Total (2 years) = £2,331,000 | 47% | Quality Corridors £1,107,000 |
| | 8% | Integrated Transport £184,000 |
| | 3% | Walking £59,000 |
| | 4% | Cycling £88,000 |
| | 14% | Accessibility Buses £341,000 |
| | 3% | Access Improvements £71,000 |
| | 11% | Bus Interchange £256,000 |
| | 2% | Bus Shelters £58,000 |
| | 3% | Crestways £81,000 |
| | 5% | PROW £107,000 |

LTP CAPITAL SPEND (2006/07-2007/08) ON MEASURES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO DELIVERING ACCESSIBILITY & PROW.

| Total (2 years) = £1,115,000 | 40% | Footway Reconstruction £446,000 |
| | 14% | Independent Footpath Network £155,000 |
| | 6% | Cycleways Maintenance £69,000 |
| | 5% | School Travel Plans Support £56,000 |
| | 29% | Local Safety Schemes £324,000 |
| | 6% | Regeneration £66,000 |

HALTON’S REVENUE SPEND (2006/07-2007/08) ON MEASURES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO DELIVERING ACCESSIBILITY & PROW.

| Total (2 years) = £7,588,000 | 0% | (Not Shown on pie chart) Transportation (net of asset support costs) £23,000 |
| | 1% | Bus Shelters £66,000 |
| | 4% | CCTV £298,000 |
| | 25% | Transport Co-ordination £1,869,000 |
| | 3% | Grant to HCT £227,000 |
| | 10% | Transport Policy & Planning £767,000 |
| | 2% | Off-Street Parking £146,000 |
| | 55% | Highways/Traffic/Lighting Management £4,191,000 |
4.0 SAFER ROADS

4.1. BACKGROUND

‘Road safety should not be viewed in isolation from other central and local government objectives. Policies to tackle climate change, social exclusion, obesity and urban renewal, to name a few, can share our objectives to reduce casualties. We need to develop these connections further through working in partnership within and across organisations’


Creating safer roads supports several of the aims and objectives from Halton’s Community Strategy, specifically:

- To promote a healthy living environment and lifestyles to protect the health of the public (A Healthy Halton)
- To ensure all children and young people grow up and thrive in safe environments (Children & Young People in Halton), and
- To create and sustain better neighbourhoods that are well designed, well built, well maintained, safe! (A Safer Halton).

In 2000, Halton’s casualty rates were well above average; People Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI), Children Killed or Seriously Injured (CKSI) and Slight casualties (SL) were respectively 109, 21 and 599 per ‘000 population (1.5, 2.3 and 1.2 times the national rate for Great Britain). During the period covered by LTP1 an extensive programme of work combining conventional traffic engineering solutions with educational, training and publicity measures was undertaken. The programme proved to be successful in reducing rates; at the end of LTP1 (2005) KSI, CKSI and Slight Casualty rates in Halton had fallen to 77, 13 and 430 per ‘000 population (1.2, 1.9 and 1.1 times the national rate).

During LTP1, the majority of casualty key hotspot locations were treated with engineering measures. In preparation for LTP2, a review of the remaining sites using accident cluster and route analysis showed that engineering measures offered only limited potential to secure further significant casualty reductions. In terms of targeting areas, an analysis of super-output areas (SOAs) and casualty data revealed a lack of correlation between deprivation and all-age casualties or child-only all-severity casualties. There was however a link between deprivation and child killed and seriously injured (CKSI) casualties; 80% of the top ten SOAs for deprivation had casualty records above the average for the borough. However, SOAs are much smaller than wards and are too small in size to enable targeting of road safety and education measures.

The results of these studies influenced the development of LTP2 where it was proposed that engineering measures implemented through Local Safety Schemes should continue to be targeted on the basis of all-age casualty hotspots at the larger ward level. At the same time it was recognised that the resulting schemes would be greater in number but smaller in scope and impact than those delivered under LTP1. LTP2 therefore proposed that overall casualty reduction work would be refocused to give greater emphasis to the role of Road Safety, Education, Training and Publicity (RSET &P). RSET&P seeks to change peoples’ behaviour on roads and challenges their inherent acceptance of road casualties. Benefits from engineering work to reduce casualties at specific locations can be easily identified but the direct effects of RSET&P are more difficult to link to specific reductions in casualties. However, as engineering schemes are implemented, opportunities for casualty reduction through addressing site-specific problems are reducing and RSET&P work is assuming a higher significance. Halton’s approach to RSET&P in the Borough includes making use of every opportunity to integrate road safety considerations in the development of schemes and initiatives not primarily associated with highways issues.

Casualty figures are available for calendar years (Jan-Dec) rather than financial years (Apr-Mar) and in Halton the actual numbers of casualties each year in the categories (CKSI, KSI and SL) can be very small. As a result year-on-year variations in casualty numbers in the Borough can be quite dramatic. Ongoing monitoring in Halton provides ample evidence to justify concerns about attributing too much significance to year-on-year variations and has shown that 5-year rolling trends are more reliable. In particular as collision and casualty numbers fall in Halton, so the figures become gradually more susceptible to being adversely affected by isolated incidents incurring a relatively large number of casualties. For this reason, the data discussed here is drawn from 2000 to 2007 and covers LTP1 and the first two calendar years of LTP2.

4.2. SAFER ROADS: ACTIONS TAKEN, CASE STUDIES AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Appendix C provides a summary of actions undertaken during 2006/07 and 2007/08 which contributed towards ‘Safer Roads’; relevant actions are highlighted with the symbol:

The following case studies highlight key achievements made during 2006/07 and 2007/08.

SAFER ROADS CASE STUDY 1: LOCAL ROAD SAFETY PARTNERSHIPS

Halton’s Road Safety Co-ordination Group is represented by the local key partner agencies from the wider Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership (CRSP). The Group is currently chaired by the Station Manager at Widnes Fire Station, and has input from the Special Investigation Unit (Northern Division) of Cheshire Constabulary along with various representatives from Halton.
Borough Council including the Road Safety Officer and a highway engineer. The key purpose of the Group is to provide local delivery of initiatives. Efforts have focused on young male drivers aged 16-25 yrs and motorcyclists; these have been identified in the CSRP Casualty Review as being key target groups. Funding has been secured to offer a cycle of ‘Pass-Plus’ training and education to young drivers in the area. The ‘Pass Plus’ training is supported by a comprehensive educational programme that includes information on drink/drug driving, field impairment tests, crash investigation and practical information on core offences such as speeding, failure to wear seat-belts and use of mobile phones. The Group has also been involved in the organisation of ‘Powerbeats’, a motorcycle and scooter event that tackles issues of rider safety through imaginative interactive sessions specifically targeted to the needs of motorcyclists and scooter riders.

Each partner within the CSSP treats motorcyclists as a priority and provides resources and initiatives accordingly. CSSP assists local delivery groups to target this vulnerable road user group and the route specific profiles for red routes allow partners to consider route-based initiatives. Much activity has been achieved through joint working between authorities and Cheshire Police and CSSP has just provided each Police basic command unit (BCU) with £5k to target enforcement at vulnerable groups and red routes. Both East and West Cheshire BCUs will be using this money to target high-powered bikes on known collision routes over the summer of 2008. Using the national intelligence model, CSSP has provided a problem profile for motorcyclists aged 31-45: a group who rank fourth on the list of the Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership ‘Red Routes’. High priority signs have been installed on the routes, warning users of the potential risks and listing the number of casualties on that particular stretch of road over a three-year period. The signs get across a clear message direct to drivers in the hazard area. ‘Red Route’ signing raises awareness and encourages the public to take responsibility for their actions and improve their driving behaviour.

Driver impairment through tiredness, drink or drugs (illicit, prescription or over-the-counter) is a major developing issue. Although there is no legal limit for impairment, the field impairment test can determine whether a driver is fit to drive. Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership (CSRP) have funded the ‘FIT CAMPAIGN’ which highlights the dangers of impairment, explains the tests involved and encourages people to consider whether they are fit to drive / fit to work / fit for life. A complementary alcohol-free bar has toured the area offering alternative drinks and is supported with practical advice about how drugs and tiredness can affect ability to drive safely. In addition, the use of ‘Fatal Vision’ TM Goggles allows participants to experience the negative reaction effects of impairment and Road Safety staff (who are themselves ‘fit’ trained officers) can provide an insight into the complexities of the roadside field impairment tests. The ‘FIT CAMPAIGN’ has proved successful in reaching the target audience of young male drivers and there is considerable demand for sessions from upper schools, colleges and workplaces.

SAFER ROADS CASE STUDY 2: FIT BAR

The scheme will be monitored for effectiveness but in other areas of the country where red routes have been introduced, the ‘Red Route’ approach has been shown to contribute to reducing casualties. For example, in the Thames Valley there has been a 25% reduction in those killed or seriously injured on ‘Red Routes’ whilst control sites showed little or no reduction in casualties. Halton has five ‘Red Routes’, launched in February 2008 with extensive local publicity. The total cost to the Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership for the five routes in Halton was £12,550. Further information on ‘Red Routes’ is available at www.ymoaferroutes.org.uk/red-roads-cheshire

SAFER ROADS CASE STUDY 3: CHESHIRE SAFER ROADS PARTNERSHIP ‘RED ROUTES’ SCHEME

Halton, twenty routes have been identified as having severe collisions and a greater risk of road users of being injured or killed in a road traffic incident. ‘Red Routes’ now form part of the Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership ‘Red Routes’. Red highway signs have been installed on the routes, warning users of the potential risks and listing the number of casualties on that particular stretch of road over a three-year period. The signs get across a clear message direct to drivers in the hazard area. ‘Red Route’ signing raises awareness and encourages the public to take responsibility for their actions and improve their driving behaviour.

SAFER ROADS PARTNERSHIP WORKING


Each of the key agencies within the CRSP has made achieving ‘Safer Roads’ a high priority and through joint endeavours, CRSP is driving to ensure determined progress towards reducing casualties. Partnership working is one of the Partnership’s stated key objectives and is central to the philosophy of CRSP which sees individuals, community groups and professionals alike, embracing the need for safer roads and taking collective responsibility.

Over the past 12 months, CRSP has employed a variety of new and established methods to deliver “Safer Roads”. These have included:

• On-going work to review the appropriateness of the current speed limit on all A and B roads within Cheshire, Halton and Warrington. Lowering speed limits on A-Roads and particularly rural A-Routes should lead to a reduction in the number of people killed and seriously injured. CRSP has programmed this work including any resulting changes in speed limits to be completed by 2011.

• Working with new partners to identify ‘at-risk’ drivers. CRSP have been working closely with agencies dealing with young people on a day-to-day basis including Connexions, Youth Service, Children & Young People Boards and Trusts, Youth Offending Teams, Primary Care Trusts and Children’s Services.

• Working directly with Connexions to make use of ‘Fit Test’ which allows young people to shape safety messages and tactics; this enables CRSP to engage with vulnerable members of the community and provides an opportunity to ‘truth test’ campaigns.

• A grant scheme helping to fund 6 separate initiatives tackling local issues across the area. In Halton, initiatives have included ‘Fit Testing’ which raises awareness of impaired driving and ‘Stop the Drop’ which aims to tackle a local issue of young people dropping objects off over bridges crossing high-speed roads.

4.3. IMPACT

Under LTP2, the impact of Halton’s actions towards safer roads is monitored using the following indicators:

Indicators: KEY OUTCOME: 5-year running average for KSI, 5-year running average for CKSI.

Targets Met: 5-year running average for KSI, 5-year running average for CKSI. Year total for SLI. These indicators are specific to the LTP and are calculated differently from similar BVR indicators (BVR 99a, BVR 99b, BVR 99c) and the National Indicators (NI 47c & NI 48).

Indicators: INTERMEDIATE: None

Indicators: CONTRIBUTING: L13 (% of reported incidents of damage to roads or pavements, repaired or made safe within 24 hrs)

The performance against each indicator is detailed in Appendix A.

Table 4.1 provides a summary of the percentage of safer roads indicators, which can be classified as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Road</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>3 year casualty total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B5170</td>
<td>Liverpool Road – from junction with Hough Green Road to junction with Prestcot Road</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5155</td>
<td>High Street/Bridge Street – from junction of High Street with Greenway Road to junction of Bridge Street with Inrel Lane</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A533</td>
<td>Silver Jubilee Bridge – from A557 slip (Widnes) to eastbound A533 slip to Bridgewater Expressway (Runcorn)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5178</td>
<td>Liverpool Road/Leigh Avenue – from junction with Prescot Road to junction with Kingsway Road</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5080</td>
<td>Lunts Heath Road – from junction with Birchfield Road to junction with Derby Road</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TARGET ON TRACK
TARGET MET

COMMENTS ON PERFORMANCE

Targets Met: 5-year running average for KSI, 5-year running average for CKSI & Year total for SLI.

• The 5-year running average for general KSI shows a considerable reduction: from 72 in 2005, to 68 in 2006, and to 64 in 2007. Figure 3.1 shows the progress that has been made during LTP1 and LTP2. Halton remains firmly on track to achieve our 2010/11 extended target.
Table 4.1: Summary of Performance Against Safer Roads Targets

**KEY OUTCOME INDICATORS**

- Includes relevant mandatory indicators required by Government and any other indicators that, in the authorities opinion, directly measure the achievement of the four shared transport priorities.

**INTERMEDIATE INDICATORS**

- Indicators representing proxies or milestones towards key outcome targets including targets for relevant mandatory indicators.

**CONTRIBUTORY INDICATORS**

- Indicators measuring the delivery of schemes, policies or initiatives which contribute towards achievement of Key and Intermediate Indicators.

Although there has been a reduction in the number of CKSIs and the long-term trend is definitely downwards, the number of CKSI as a proportion of the total KSI remains a concern. Analysis is currently being undertaken to better understand the causes and behaviour patterns behind these figures and specifically tailor road safety education and training measures to tackle them. Investigations into the split of road user types within the casualty figures indicate that the reductions achieved so far have been in proportion to the category being considered. This suggests that Halton is providing a balanced range of road safety engineering, education, publicity and training (RSETP) which is proving to be effective.

**Targets Not Met:** None applicable.

**Targets On-Track:** None applicable.

**Figure 3.1: KSI, CKSI and Slight Casualties 2000-2007**
4.4. Future Monitoring

Guidance on LTP2 Progress Reports published by the Department for Transport (DfT) recommends that all 2008 reports should include information on the 17 LTP mandatory core and Best Value Performance Indicators (BVP) and locally determined targets. Figures for indicators at the end of 2006/07 and 2007/08 together with targets appear in the tables in Appendix A of this report.

Future monitoring of indicators for LTP2 is being influenced by the new National Indicator (NI) set introduced from April 2008 in an attempt to simplify reporting requirements and reduce the burden of data collection. LTP2 guidance suggests that the LTP2 interim review should be used as an opportunity to review future monitoring in light of the need to simplify reporting. Nine of the 17 mandatory LTP indicators have been included in the 198 National Indicators (NI) and so will continue to be reported but Local Authorities are urged to consider which of the remaining 8 indicators they propose to continue monitoring during the remaining LTP2 period.

4.5. Risk Assessment: Opportunities and Threats

Excellent progress has made during the first two years of LTP2, resulting from a comprehensive package of measures and initiatives covering engineering, enforcement and education. Halton’s resourcing of casualty reduction work to give greater emphasis to Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity (RSET&P) appears to be successful with continued reductions in KSI, CKSI and Slight casualties.

As the case studies show, Halton is an active member of the Chesire Safer Roads Partnership and has introduced successful initiatives linked to and/or funded by the Partnership. Halton will continue to utilise and encourage opportunities created by the Safer Roads Partnership to advance RSET&P schemes in the Borough. Through the CRSP road safety issues can be tackled strategically. For example, CRSP research involving extensive analysis of data across Cheshire has identified young male drivers as a high risk group. Resources are being targeted at this group and a wide range of activities is being developed to engage and challenge high-risk attitudes and behaviour.

Beyond LTP2, the Mersey Gateway project will also provide opportunities to improve safety for cross-river journeys, particularly for walkers and cyclists who will benefit from facilities provided on the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB).

4.6. Risk Assessment: Barriers & Obstacles

The greatest improvements in safety are likely to be achieved by changing attitudes and behaviour of road users via Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity (RSET&P). However RSET&P requires considerable revenue funding and staff resources. To meet the growing demand for RSET&P services, more revenue funding is required and to be effective, this funding needs to be sustained rather than offered on a short-term basis. Additional revenue funding would enable extra staff to be employed permanently on a full-time basis. The lack of resource to employ necessary RSET&P staff is part of the wider lack of revenue funding available for softer measures which was discussed under the Risk Assessment for Tackling Congestion and Network Management Duties.

4.7. Risk: Overall Assessment

Overall Assessment of Risk: Green

The excellent progress made during LTP1 on ‘Safer Roads’ has continued in LTP2 with 100% of key outcome indicators and 100% of contributory indicators being met. LTP2 proposed that overall casualty reduction work should be re-focused to give greater emphasis to Road Safety Education, Training & Publicity (RSET&P) and this appears to have been successful. In terms of delivery of RSET&P at the LTP2 level, Halton has reviewed the key areas of delivery and has identified the following as the main priority areas. Halton’s approach to RSET&P makes use of every opportunity to integrate road safety considerations into larger schemes and working closely with partners to deliver initiatives; this has proven successful even with the limited resources and funds currently available. For these reasons, the overall assessment has been graded as green.

In the long term, limited resources and revenue funding will probably restrict what can be achieved through RSET&P. However, Halton’s focus on delivering initiatives and working closely with partners to deliver initiatives has proven successful even with the limited resources and funds currently available. For these reasons, the overall assessment has been graded as green.

4.8. Use of Resources towards ‘Safer Roads’


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total (2 years) £</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Safety Schemes</td>
<td>£232,000</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic Signals</td>
<td>£94,000</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>£286,000</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Travel Plans Support</td>
<td>£55,000</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenways</td>
<td>£81,000</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking</td>
<td>£59,000</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling</td>
<td>£88,000</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total (2 years) £</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality Corridors</td>
<td>£1,107,000</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access Improvements</td>
<td>£71,000</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highways Maintenance</td>
<td>£2,166,000</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge Maintenance</td>
<td>£2,021,000</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated Transport</td>
<td>£184,000</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regeneration</td>
<td>£66,000</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Halton’s Revenue Spend (2006/07-2008/08) on Measures that Contribute Towards Safer Roads.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total (2 years) £</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highways Maintenance</td>
<td>£1,665,000</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCTV</td>
<td>£298,000</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Crossing Patrols</td>
<td>£208,000</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport Co-ordination</td>
<td>£1,869,000</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport Policy &amp; Planning</td>
<td>£176,000</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highway/Transport/Street Lighting Management</td>
<td>£1,284,000</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge Maintenance</td>
<td>£262,000</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Lighting</td>
<td>£3,197,000</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highways Maintenance</td>
<td>£1,665,000</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For contributing indicators, our Highways section will continue to collect and report on L13 % of reported incidents of damage to roads and pavements, repaired or made safe within 24 hours.

The National Indicator set includes two indicators related to road safety: NI 47 ‘People killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents’ and NI 48 ‘Children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents’. In both cases these indicators will be based on a three-year rolling average. In Halton, the actual number of casualties each year can be very small and so the agreed LTP2 key outcome indicators have been based on a five-year rolling average. Monitoring has shown that this provides a more reliable indication of casualty trends in the Borough and so Halton therefore proposes to continue reporting the agreed five-year rolling averages for KSI, CKSI and Slight casualties as well as the National Indicators for the remainder of LTP2. Targets for the LTP indicators will not be changed.
5.0 BETTER AIR QUALITY

5.1. BACKGROUND

Air quality can impact on both short-term and long-term health. In the short-term, those at risk include people with lung or heart conditions especially if they are elderly, and daily changes in air pollution can trigger increased admissions to hospitals. The understanding of long-term effects is more limited but experts suggest that cutting long-term exposure to fine particulates could increase life expectancy on average by between 1 and 11 months (source: Defra website www.defra.gov.uk).

Road transport is one of the main sources of air pollutants, particularly in urban areas. Nationally, emissions of key air pollutants from road transport have fallen by about 50% over the past decade whilst levels of road traffic have steadily increased. The improvement in emissions has mainly been due to progressively tighter vehicle and fuel standards and it is expected that these standards will deliver a further 25% reduction in emissions over the next decade.

Improving air quality through reducing the emissions from road transport supports several of the aims and objectives from the Community Strategy and specifically:

- To promote a healthy living environment and lifestyles to protect the health of the public (A Healthy Halton)
- To enhance, promote and celebrate the quality of the built and natural environment’ (Halton’s Urban Renewal), and
- To ensure all children and young people grow up and thrive in safe environments (Children & Young People in Halton).

Local authorities have a statutory requirement to periodically review air quality within their area and assess levels of pollutants against Air Quality Objectives published by the Government. Seven pollutants linked with transport emissions are included in the Air Quality Objectives; these are benzene, 1,3-butadiene, carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), particulate matter under 10 microns diameter (PM10) and sulphur dioxide.

Halton’s first review and assessment of air quality was published in November 1999 and identified two areas adjacent to the approach roads on the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB) which, as a result of vehicle emissions and industrial processes, were at risk of exceeding air quality objectives for nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and PM10. The air quality review was updated in 2003 and monitoring showed that air quality objectives were actually being achieved at the two areas; this is probably due to the elevated and exposed nature of the SJB approach roads which allows exhaust gases to be diluted and dispersed. The 2003 air quality review found no other areas in Halton at risk of exceeding air quality objectives.

Another air quality update was undertaken in 2006 and the results showed that there were no substantially increased levels of emissions in the Borough. However initial monitoring did identify several potential future ‘hotspots’ for NO₂ and PM10. Work carried out during 2007/08 confirmed the need for more detailed monitoring of these pollutants at key sites and Halton Borough Council has recently secured funding to purchase new air quality monitoring equipment.

If future concentrations of pollutants fail to meet the Air Quality Objectives, Halton will be required to declare Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). At this stage it is not clear if it will be necessary to declare any AQMAs during the remaining years of LTP2. Should it be necessary to declare an AQMA, an Action Plan would be developed and where road traffic has been identified as a main source of emissions, measures would be proposed to reduce them. Progress on air quality and an update on AQMAs will be reported in the final Delivery Report for LTP2 and if appropriate a target for the indicator ‘LTP8: An air quality target related to traffic’ will be set for future LTPs.

5.2. ACTIONS TAKEN, CASE STUDIES AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Appendix C provides a summary of actions undertaken during 2006/07 and 2007/08 which contributed towards ‘Better Air Quality’; relevant actions are highlighted with the symbol:

The following case studies outline key achievements made during 2006/07 and 2007/08.

BETTER AIR QUALITY CASE STUDY 1: MILTON ROAD, WIDNES

Traffic queuing at Milton Road / Kingsway Junction, Widnes

Milton Road is an unclassified road in Widnes which links Kingsway (B5419) with the Simms Cross area. The street is urban and has a traditional ‘terrace’ layout with the fronts of properties adjacent to the road: this is known to have a ‘canyon’ effect which makes it difficult for pollutants to disperse. The street has both residential and commercial properties and a recent supermarket development. Monitoring undertaken during 2006/07of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) using diffusion tubes indicates that levels of NO₂ at this location may be at risk of exceeding Air Quality Objectives in the future. Queuing traffic has been observed between the signalised junction serving the supermarket and the Kingsway...
In early 2008, Halton Borough Council installed new real-time air quality monitoring equipment on Milton Road and will be closely observing levels of NO2. Work is already underway to reduce traffic congestion on Milton Road with the installation of MOVA at the traffic signals at the Milton Road/Kingsway Junction. The MOVA (Microprocessor Optimised Vehicle Actuation) signal control system assesses traffic conditions at the junction and adjusts signal timings accordingly in order to maximise capacity and reduce queuing. Studies by the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) / DfT show that MOVA reduced delays by an average of 13% compared to earlier control systems.

BETTER AIR QUALITY: PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Efforts to improve air quality require a range of measures and a strong partnership approach. In 2007, the Environmental Protection Team at Halton Borough Council held an initial meeting, involving representatives from Planning, Major Projects, Highways and Transportation to discuss future potential air quality problems at key sites and explore management options.

5.3. IMPACT

Under LTP2, the impact of Halton’s actions towards ‘Better Air Quality’ is monitored using the following indicators:

Indicators: KEY OUTCOME: None at present. LTP8: ‘An air quality target related to traffic’ may be included in future LTPs.

Indicators: INTERMEDIATE: BVPI 100: Number of days of temporary traffic controls or road closure on traffic sensitive roads caused by local authority road works per km of traffic sensitive road.

Indicators: CONTRIBUTING: L5: Number of Park & Ride spaces at Rail Stations.
L6: Percentage of schools with School Travel Plans in place.
L7: % of local firms (of more than 100 employees) with Commuter Plan in place.
L12: Number of Personalised Journey Plans issued each year. As discussed under ‘Delivering Accessibility including Public Rights of Way’, indicator L12 has shown considerable improvement since 2006/7 as a result of the Council’s Direct Link Call Centre now being able to offer Personalised Travel advice.

Targets Not Met: During 2006/7 and 2007/08 the number of Park & Ride spaces at rail stations has stayed static at 520, missing the L5 target of 560. However an improvement scheme for Widnes station that includes an increase of over 100 parking spaces is currently being progressed and should be completed well before the end of LTP2. Virgin Trains are also improving car parking provision at Runcorn Station and construction is underway on a 510 space multi-storey car park.

Targets On-Track: None applicable.

Table 5.1 provides a summary of the percentage of Air Quality indicators which can be classified as follows:

Table 5.1: Summary of Performance delivering ‘Better Air Quality’

KEY OUTCOME INDICATORS

Includes relevant mandatory indicators required by Government and any other indicators that, in the authority’s opinion, directly measure the achievement of the four shared transport priorities.

INTERMEDIATE INDICATORS

Indicators that represent proxies or milestones towards key outcome targets including targets for relevant mandatory indicators.

CONTRIBUTORY INDICATORS

Indicators measuring the delivery of schemes, policies or initiatives which contribute towards achievement of Key and Intermediate indicators.
5.4. Future Monitoring

Guidance on LTP2 Progress Reports published by the Department for Transport (DfT) recommends that all 2008 reports should include information on the 17 LTP mandatory core and Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPPI) and locally determined targets. However there are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) declared in Halton and the core indicator LTP8 ‘An air quality target related to traffic’ does not therefore apply.

Future monitoring of indicators for LTP2 is being influenced by the new National Indicator (NI) set introduced from April 2008 in an attempt to simplify reporting requirements and reduce the burden of data collection. LTP2 guidance suggests that the LTP2 interim review should be used as an opportunity to review future monitoring in light of the need to simplify reporting. Nine of the 17 mandatory LTP core indicators have been included in the 198 National Indicators (NI) and so will continue to be reported but Local Authorities are urged to consider which of the remaining 8 indicators they propose to continue monitoring during the remaining LTP2 period. The new National Indicator set does not include a specific indicator for air quality although air quality in the long-term will contribute to NI 137: Healthy life expectancy at age 65 (PSA 17).

At this stage it is not clear if monitoring under future LTPs will include an air quality target such as LTP8. Given the uncertainty of future requirements, the current emphasis on the need to simplify reporting and the absence of existing AQMAs in the Borough, it is inappropriate to set a target for LTP8 for the remaining years of LTP2. This position will be reviewed towards the end of LTP2.

Halton proposes that all intermediate and contributory indicators listed under ‘Better Air Quality’ will continue to be collected and monitored for the remainder of LTP2 and relevant targets will remain unchanged.

5.5. Risk Assessment: Opportunities and Threats

Air quality is an emerging issue for Halton and presents an opportunity for the Borough to explore how policies, strategies and schemes can be developed to address air quality issues. In terms of threats, the development of measures to address air quality will require commitment and resources from internal & external partners. These resources include; staff time; equipment for more detailed air quality monitoring; and funding for both physical changes to infrastructure and softer measures to encourage use of sustainable transport. Beyond LTP2, the Mersey Gateway project and particularly the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy present a valuable opportunity to introduce initiatives that may help to reduce emissions from transport.

5.6. Risk Assessment: Barriers & Obstacles

At the time LTP2 was developed, air quality was not an issue in the Borough and no specific actions were proposed. Traffic congestion contributes to poor air quality and so the barriers and obstacles described in Section 2.6 under ‘Tackling Congestion’ are relevant to this priority.

5.7. Risk: Overall Assessment

Overall Assessment of Risk: Green

The absence of specific targets and measures proposed for air quality in Halton’s LTP2 makes it difficult to assess progress so far. However, of the intermediate and contributory indicators which have been allocated to air quality, 80% have been met. The challenge for Halton Borough Council over the remaining years of LTP2 will be responding to possible future air quality issues in the Borough. Initial progress has been good with a multi-disciplinary approach being taken in examining issues and possible measures. For this reason, the overall risk assessment has been graded as green.

The pie charts opposite attempt to show how Council spending during the two-year period has contributed towards achieving the priority. However it is important to note that the same areas of spend will appear under more than one priority and that the sum of the amounts shown under each priority will be greater than the actual total capital and revenue funding for transport available to the authority. A summary of LTP capital and Halton revenue spend for 2006/07 and 2007/08 is provided in Section 9 and this shows that a total of £8,534.00 capital and £16,971,000 revenue was spent over the two years. Some entries for revenue spend shown in the charts include spending on items such as staff salaries, premises costs, equipment, and support services.

5.8. Use of Resources towards ‘Better Air Quality’


- Total (2 years) = £6,911,000
  - 50% VMS £348,000
  - 28% Highway Improvements £1,96,000
  - 67% Quality Corridors £1,107,000
  - 11% Integrated Transport £184,000
  - 12% School Travel Plans Support £55,000
  - 4% Greenways £81,000

- Total (2 years) = £1,656,000
  - 67% Quality Corridors £1,107,000
  - 4% Walking £59,000
  - 4% Cycling £88,000
  - 11% Integrated Transport £184,000
  - 4% Regeneration £66,000
  - 28% Highway Improvements £1,96,000

- Total (2 years) = £4,191,000
  - 59% Highways/Traffic/Lighting Management £380,000
  - 4% Bridge Maintenance £262,000
  - 28% Highway Improvements £1,96,000


- Total (2 years) = £7,112,000
  - 0% (Not Shown on pie chart) Transportation net of asset support costs £23,000
  - 26% Transport Co-ordination £1,869,000
  - 11% Transport Policy & Planning £767,000
  - 59% Highways/Traffic/Lighting Management £4,191,000
  - 4% Bridge Maintenance £262,000